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A Practical Discourse

UPON

HUMILITY.

Wherein is ſhewn,

The *Nature*, *Reaſonableneſs*, and *Uſefulneſs* thereof.

Together

With the Ways of *Expreſſing* and *Increaſing* it.

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THE

THE INTRODUCTION.

I AM now entring upon the Conſideration of a Vertue, which is in a manner proper and peculiar to the Chriſtian Religion: 'Tis called *Humility*, or *Lowlineſs of Heart*. A Vertue to which even the wiſeſt of the old *Pagans* were for the moſt part ſtrangers: For, though they diſcourſed well againſt Pride, and of the Unreaſonableneſs and Folly of it; yet were they to ſeek, as to the Notion and Nature, and eſpecially as to the Practice of Humility. In *fact* they were generally Proud; only ſome of them were more addicted to that Vice, than others were: As 'twas ſaid of *Diogenes*, when he went into *Plato*'s fine Houſe, and with rudeneſs and inſolence trod upon his rich Carpets; *That he trampled upon* Plato's *Pride, and yet himſelf was much the proudeſt of the two.* Theſe Men ſpake many good things of Sobriety, Modeſty, and moderation of Mind; and of

the government of Mens Desires; which may be applied to this Vertue by way of accommodation; but I do not find that they hit rightly upon this most amiable perfection, Humility. So far from it, that they used those words in a bad Sence, which both in the *Greek* and *Latin* Languages signifie an humble Heart: They meant by those expressions, an abject Mind, weakness and littleness of Spirit, Pusillanimity; a servile, slavish and cowardly Disposition; a degenerous and mean Temper; a low, sordid Spirit that sinks presently, when a Man meets with any Calamity or Disappointment; a pitiful, sneaking Mind, that upon any Discouragements makes a Man to Apostatize from himself; to fall from his Constancy, and behave himself after such a poor manner, as unbecommeth a wise Man. These are wrong Notions of Humility; and those Philosophers express'd their Notions by words that are too good for them; but the reason was, because they did not well understand the Vertue it self; and, perhaps, were not very willing to understand it; because they themselves were guilty of an epidemical Vice to which it stands in direct opposition. The Lord Jesus, who brought Life and Immortality to light, did in his own Person give

give the World a moſt lively Idea of Humility; and hath made the Practice of it the diſtinguiſhing Mark of his own true Diſciples: So that he is none of his, who has not, as he had, an humble Mind: He may be a Philoſopher, but he cannot be a Chriſtian. To this purpoſe ſome learned Criticks have obſerved out of that place, 1 *Pet.* 5. 5. where the Apoſtle bids us to *be cloathed with humility*, that the *Greek* word (which we render *cloathed*) ſignifies a ſervile Habit, a ſhort little Garment, white but very courſe, that the meaneſt Servants were formerly wont to wear about their Shoulders, as a particular token of their poor and low Condition; a mark of their Servitude, like a Badge or a Livery, to diſtinguiſh them from others. Thus the Alluſion is very elegant, and the Sence plain, *viz.* That Humility is the peculiar Note of Chriſt's Servants; a far better Ornament than a Philoſopher's Pall, under which a faſtidious Mind was wont to lurk; the true Livery of a Chriſtian indeed; the Badge of thoſe that belong to the Lord Jeſus, how deſpicable ſoever it may appear to the Men of this World; the diſtinguiſhing Mark of ſuch as ſerve him, who took upon himſelf the form of a Servant; and came into the World, not

to be miniſtred unto, but to miniſter even his Heart Blood for the Life of the World.

In diſcourſing upon this admirable Chriſtian Vertue, I ſhall obſerve my former plain Method; and conſider with what brevity I can conveniently, theſe Three things as General Heads of the following Diſcourſe.

I. Wherein the true Nature of Humility doth conſiſt.

II. What Motives and Arguments there are to inforce the Practice of it.

III. After what Manner and Way we are to expreſs it.

A Practical Diſcourſe UPON HUMILITY.

CHAP. I.

Of the Nature of Humility.

FIRST as touching the true Nature of Humility. It is, in ſhort, a modeſt and ſlender Opinion of a Man's own ſelf, whatever his Endowments or his Circumſtances are. An *Opinion*, I ſay; firſt, becauſe the proper Seat of Humility is in the Mind. A lowly Heart, an humble Soul; that is the thing which God values. He looketh not, as we poor Creatures do, at things outward: He judgeth not of Men according to appearance; by dejected

Countenances; by lugubrious Looks; by a sordid or homely Dress; no, nor by those semblances of Humility which some express, when they call themselves the greatest of Sinners, the vilest People, and by a great many other hard Names, which they will not endure their Neighbour to give them. For all these exterior semblances and shews of Humility may very easily consist with a conceited and proud Mind. A *Lucifer* may be hid under such disguises. All this may be nothing but a sort of Ostentation; an art of gaining Esteem and Applause; the effect of Pride, and a means of serving the Ends of it; the professions and formalities of profligate Hypocrites. The hidden Man of the Heart is the true Ornament: Humility is that of the Spirit, the *casting down of imaginations, and of every high thing that exalteth it self against God, and the bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ*, 2 Cor. 10. 5. Pride is properly an elation of the Mind, an high and lofty Conceit; the Sin of the Devil, and the Original Cause of those Mischiefs which have made the World miserable, since the Devil infected our first Parents with the Disease: And the office of this Vertue, Humility, is to cure and clear all our Minds from the

the Contagion; to bring us by Methods of Revulſion to a right Opinion of our own ſelves; and to lay us low in our own Thoughts, under a due ſenſe of what we really are.

THIS Opinion of our ſelves therefore muſt be, Secondly, very modeſt and ſlender: For it muſt needs be very mean, if it be a due eſtimation of our ſelves; no more than what is juſt and proportionable to our true value; exactly according to our intrinſick worth, as we ſhall ſee hereafter, when we come to conſider what little reaſon any Man in the World hath to be proud. *I ſay, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himſelf more highly than he ought to think, but to think ſoberly according as God hath dealt to every man the meaſure of faith*, Rom. 12. 13. Nothing hinders but that a Man may eſteem himſelf; provided, that his thoughts be fair and equal; that he eſteem himſelf juſt as he is, and juſt as he hath of his own. The ſin is when he rates himſelf above his real Dignity; when he overvalueth his Deſerts; when he thinks more, and higher, and greater things of himſelf than he ought. For ſo every proud Man doth: He inhaunceth his own

Price: He raiſeth himſelf beyond the true Standard: His Pride and Vanity, his Folly and Sin lie in his overweening Conceit; in pretending to Excellencies which he hath not, and to higher things than he really deſerves: In belying himſelf after a moſt hateful manner: In fanſying and boaſting himſelf to be ſome Body; in giving out, and ſetting himſelf off, like *Simon* the Sorcerer, to be ſome great thing, when he is nothing at all; nay, when he is worſe than nothing, a miſerable fooliſh and very wicked thing of a Man; much the more fooliſh for being Proud; and much the more miſerable and wicked for being like the Devil. I ſay therefore to every Man among you, *not to think of himſelf more highly than he ought to think; but to think ſoberly*; that is, according to the meaſures of Humility; to think ſo as to be modeſt; not to ſet up any airy and high-flown Conceits, but to furl their Sails, to contract their Thoughts, and to ſhrink them within their due limits and ſcantling.

Σωφροσύνην ἐκάλεσε τὴν ταπεινοφροσύνην, ſaith St. *Chryſoſtom*; the Apoſtle here calls Humility by the name of *Sobriety*: And he gives us the Etymology of the word too, to ſhew that proud Men have quite

quite loſt their ſober Senſes, if ever they had any. They are no longer Men of ſound Underſtandings and Judgment, but things beſide themſelves; mere toys and phantaſtical Creatures, with their Heads all puff'd up, as if they had nothing in them but Bladders and Bubbles. There are divers overweening Conceits, which plainly argue all proud People to be carried away with Wind and Vapours; either, that the things they value themſelves upon came not altogether from God; but chiefly, if not ſolely, from themſelves, and are the effects of their own Wit and Induſtry: or, if from God, yet that they were beſtowed as a juſt Reward of their ſingular Merits and Dignity: That their Portion is much greater than other Mens: That they know much better than others what to do with their Acquiſitions: That in all, or in moſt reſpects, they are more excellent than their Neighbours, and that hardly any thing can be too much for them, if they can but get it. And what is all this but wild Imagination? Pride without any bottom? Folly which they themſelves could not but be aſham'd of, did they ſeriouſly and ſoberly conſider, from what Hand every Man of us receives his All; and for what purpoſes; that all of

us

us are but Stewards in our ſeveral Places and Vocations: And that the things committed to our Truſt, are no other than Debts and Burthens; things we owe, and things we are accountable for; and things which Men of reaſon will think as improper for them to value themſelves upon, as it is to be proud of Incumbrances or Poverty.

THEREFORE, to bring our hearts down to a true level, we muſt be very careful to baniſh out of our Minds all undue and flattering Opinions of our own worth, and to reduce our ſelves to *David's* temper, *Pſal.* 131. *Lord, I am not high-minded: I have no proud looks: I do not exerciſe my ſelf in great matters, which are too high for me; but I refrain my Soul and keep it low; like as a Child that is weaned from his Mother; yea, my Soul is even as a weaned Child.* Which puts me in mind of the method our bleſſed Saviour uſed with his Diſciples, when they diſputed among themſelves, which of them ſhould be the greateſt. Some of them would have been his chief Favourites, the principal Officers in that glorious Kingdom, upon Earth, which they expected he would one day ſet up. To cure this their ambitious Humour, he took up a little Child

Child in his Arms, and propos'd the Child to them as an emblem of Humility; with this ſolemn declaration, that very nearly concerns us all, *Except ye be converted, and become as little Children, ye ſhall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*, Mat. 18. 3,4. 'Men die (ſaith *Seneca*) in a worſe con-'dition than they were born in; becauſe 'Nature did not bring us out of the 'Womb with that Pride, and Vanity, and 'Ambition of mind, which afterwards 'becomes the reproach of Manhood, and 'of our riper Years. Though indeed the ſeeds of theſe Vices be in us naturally, yet 'tis our own fault that they grow up with us; and the deſign of Chriſt's Religion is, to bring our Souls to an Infant ſtate of Innocence and Humility, that we may go out of the World as well (at leaſt) as we came into it; Children the ſecond time; Children as to all Malice, as to all guile, as to all airy and bloating conceits of our own excellencies. We can never be truly humble as we ſhould, and as we muſt be, in order to our entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven, till we leave exalting of our ſelves above meaſure. Pride, we may be ſure will keep us out of God's Preſence, becauſe it would not ſuffer Angels themſelves to ſtay in it. Their original Sin con-

conſiſted, in admiring exceſſively the eminent Perfections of their Nature, and the Glory of their State. Hence followed a ſtate of Envy at the more eminent Condition of thoſe Orders of Angels that were placed above them: This grew into direct Hoſtility againſt them, and againſt God himſelf, the Maker and Diſpoſer of them all. This Hoſtility increaſed into open Apoſtaſie; and all ended by God's juſt Judgment in their final and eternal Damnation, and ſo of Glorious Angels they became Helliſh Devils.

SINCE which time, their ſole buſineſs hath been to propagate their Envy and Malice, and Apoſtaſie from the Father of us all; and ſo to involve Mankind under the ſame Condemnation: But their chief Artifice, and that which by their own ſad Experience they have found to be the ſureſt way, is to accelerate our ruine by propagating their Pride; that is, loftineſs of Opinion, and haughtineſs of Heart, the firſt Sin that ever was in Heaven; and the firſt Sin thoſe Devils brought upon the Earth. So they made our firſt Parents believe, that they ſhould *be as Gods, knowing good and evil*, Gen. 3. 5. And the ſame Sin which

which coſt thoſe Angels their Celeſtial Paradiſe, did preſently coſt our Parents and Us the Earthly one. Ambition and ſelf-conceit began the War between God and his Creatures: It was made the firſt Example of God's Vengeance, and 'tis that which God will purſue with Vengeance to all Eternity. *He reſiſteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble,* James 4.6. This then is true Humility, and Wiſdom alſo, not to think our ſelves to be better or greater than we are, but to rate our ſelves according to our juſt value; which cannot but be very low, if we would but inquire into our ſelves impartially. But this is one great fault, and the cauſe of a great many more, that every Man is apt to overlook himſelf, while he prieth narrowly into the ſtate of others: Whereas, did we duly apply our Hearts to find out and underſtand our own Condition, our Follies, and Demerits, the mere Vanity of Pride would in a little time make the Sin a ridicule, and dethrone its dominion, by expoſing it to contempt and ſcorn. Its credit and prevalency proceeds from our neglects at home, becauſe we are ſuch ſtrangers to our own ſelves; with whom we ſhould have the cloſeſt, and might have the ſafeſt intimacy. We ſtill take it for granted,

granted, That we really are, what we willingly believe our ſelves to be. Either we look not into our ſtate at all, or elſe take a very tranſient and falſe view; paſſing over the diſcovery of thoſe flaws and humbling Idea's, which ſhould have been the principal Object; and perhaps fearing too, leſt upon a ſtrict Examination we ſhould ſee ſomething to be aſham'd of. By this means we ſcarcely judge ſo much as by appearance; but bring our ſelves into a miſtaken Reputation with our own over-credulous Hearts; and go on in the Error, till we are paſt making Righteous Judgment, and are quite out of the reach of Self-condemnation.

OUR firſt care therefore muſt be, to have as perfect a knowledge as we can of our ſelves, what we are indeed, and what we deſerve upon a true eſtimate: For till the Account be juſt which we take, it will be impoſſible for us to be deliver'd from that opiniatry, and conceitedneſs of Mind, which is as different a thing from true Humility, as that *Phariſee* was from the poor *Publican*, Luke 18. His Prayer was all Heraldry, and Oſtentation, while the other ſtanding at a diſtance would not ſo much as lift up his Eyes to Heaven, but ſmote upon his Breaſt

Breaſt, ſaying, *God be merciful to me a ſinner: This man*, ſaith our Saviour, *went down to his houſe juſtified, rather than the other: For every one that exalteth himſelf, ſhall be abaſed; and he that humbleth himſelf, ſhall be exalted*, verſe 14.

2. HAVING thus briefly ſhewed wherein the Nature of Humility doth conſiſt, *viz.* In a modeſt and ſlender Opinion of ones own ſelf; I proceed now, according to the Method propoſed, to conſider the Motives which render this great Chriſtian Vertue practical, and the Arguments which ſerve to inforce the practice of it.

WHERE divers things will fall under our Meditations; which I ſhall endeavour to put together into a little room; but muſt not wholly omit any of them: Becauſe the Vertue I now treat of, is of ſuch neceſſary and great Concernment, that there is no fear of ſaying too much; hardly indeed a poſſibility of ſaying enough, to recommend it to our Hearts.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

The Loveline ſs of Humility.

1. THE Native Beauty and Loveli-neſs of this Vertue; perhaps a-bove the Rivalry of any other. This is one great reproach and infamy to Pride, That neither God nor Man can endure it. Seven things God hates after a more particular manner; as *Solomon* tells us, *Prov. 6. A lying tongue; hands that ſhed innocent blood; a heart that deviſeth wicked imaginations; feet that be ſwift in running to miſchief; a falſe witneſs that ſpeaketh lyes; him that ſoweth diſcord among brethren:* But chiefly, and in the firſt place *a proud Look*, or *haughty Eyes.* And one main reaſon is, becauſe where-ever Diſcord is ſown, 'tis this medling Vice that finds the Seed, prepares the Soil, and hath an Eye upon the Harveſt. *Only by pride cometh contention*, Prov. 13. 10. 'Tis the only prolifick, natural Mother, which is continually in travail with that Evil, which is ſo hateful to the God of Love and Peace. For theſe baſe Effects, and for the natural turpitude of the

the Vice it ſelf, it is of all others the moſt hateful to Mankind alſo: So that though in many caſes People generally love communion and ſociety in Sin; yet in this they abhor it; for proud Wretches are deteſted by all; and moſt of all by thoſe who are as proud as they; till the emulation riſeth like that between *Cæſar* and *Pompey*; the one could not indure a Superior, nor the other an Equal. All this while Humility carrieth irreſiſtable Charms with it. It is a moſt graceful Vertue, that wins the Eſteem and Affections of every beholder; not excepting the haughty Perſon himſelf. As it is the moſt Chriſtian, ſo it is the moſt becoming Vertue to ſet any one off; and we may deſervedly give it the ſame Character (at leaſt) which St. *Peter* gives *of a meek and quiet ſpirit*; *an ornament of great price*, 1 *Pet.* 3. 4. An humble Spirit, naturally quickens us to thoſe Actions which affect Men with Pleaſure: It doth not things that are harſh or diſobliging: It is not capricious, or ſcornful: It lieth not upon the catch: It maketh not unjuſt or ſevere conſtructions: It is not an Enemy to Charity or Friendſhip, nor to any the moſt homely Offices that are good: It is no diſturber of another's Peace: It is not void of Tender-

neſs, or Compaſſion: It needs no Lure, but the Love of God and Man to make it ſtoop: It reſents not every Peccadillo, nor magnifies Infirmities beyond their due meaſure; much leſs doth it falſifie for Reputation or Intereſt ſake: It is not rough, nor is it wont to threaten, or oppreſs, or to ſcare People after an inſolent manner, like that weak and haughty Prince, *Rehoboam*, 1 *Kings* 12. where we ſee a remarkable inſtance of a proud Temper, and ſuch an account of the End and Folly of it, as, I think, is hardly to be parallell'd in the whole Scripture; unleſs it be the Story of *Nebuchadnezzar*'s being turned out among the Beaſts. *Rehoboam* coming young to the Throne of his Father *Solomon*, all *Iſrael* beſought him, in ſome meaſure, to eaſe them of their former Burdens: And his wiſeſt and honeſteſt Counſellors adviſed him to treat the People after a kind, gentle, and reſpectful manner, as the only ſure way of preſerving their Affections. *If*, ſaid they, *thou wilt be a ſervant unto this people this day, and wilt ſerve them, and anſwer them, and ſpeak good words to them, then they will be thy ſervants for ever.* But this method pleaſed not *Rehoboam:* He was willing rather to hearken to thoſe raw Counſellors, who knowing his

his rough and imperious Diſpoſition, adviſed him according to his own Mind; though it was to the ruine of his Greatneſs. So he uſed the People with Contempt and Menaces, frightning them with an arrogant Anſwer, That his *little finger ſhould be thicker* (or heavier) *than his father's loins*; that he would *add to their yoke*; and that whereas his Father had chaſtiſed them with Whips, he himſelf would chaſtiſe them with Scorpions. And what did this turn to in the end? Why, the People could not bear his Pride and Inſolence, and threatnings of Oppreſſion. It preſently alienated their Minds; and that of courſe brought on an open defection from him. *What portion*, ſaid they, *have we in David? Neither have we inheritance in the ſon of Jeſſe: to your tents, O Iſrael: now ſee to thine own houſe, David.* And *ſo Iſrael departed unto their tents*, and rebelled, all but the Tribe of *Judah*, againſt the Houſe of *David*, and ſet up *Jeroboam*, a King of their own. I will not diſpute here about the Juſtice or Injuſtice of this act of theirs. The Proceedings were Natural enough (which is all I would obſerve from the Story) becauſe nothing doth more naturally and powerfully tend to ſowre Mens Minds, to alienate their Affections, and

to eſtrange their Hearts, than Pride doth.

ON the other hand; every Body loves an humble Perſon, becauſe Humility is naturally amiable; and the more amiable, becauſe it is attended with many ſuch other Graces, as win and endear the Hearts of all Mankind, with a power that is uncontroulable, and attractive, like the faculty of a Magnet. Where true Humility is, there is Meekneſs, Charity, Candour, Affability, Courteſie, Gentleneſs, a ſerene Brow, kind Intreatings, and the like; nor is it poſſible but ſuch graceful Endowments muſt meet with kind entertainment, and be beloved every where.

WHEN *Ageſilaus* of *Lacedæmon*, who was ſo eſteemed for his great Wiſdom, was deſired to give his Opinion how a Man ſhould do to get all Peoples Love; he told *Socrates*, *That the ſureſt way would be, to ſpeak well, and to do better.* And this is one part of an humble Man's buſineſs; to give others the kindeſt Characters he is able, and to do them all the Good he can: And ſuch offices, offices of Love, return into his own Boſom; he receives himſelf, as a Reward of them, a cer-

a certain retaliation of good Nature; like the skilful Apothecary that prepares for others precious Ointments and Aromaticks, which in the very preparing perfume and enrich his own Shop.

BEFORE *Honour is Humility*, ſaith *Solomon*, Prov. 15. 33. Humility is the certain, ready way to it. Though a good Name be far from being his Aim or End, yet it will be an humble Man's Lot, whether he will or no; and, notwithſtanding his own Deſires, or Endeavours to the contrary, he becomes Popular for the beſt reaſons. For all Mankind deſire to be well uſed: It is a Principle never to be rooted out of humane Nature; and when they find theſe their innocent Appetites anſwered, they cannot but love and honour the Hand that dealeth ſo well with them: It is as Natural as it is to deteſt the thick and heavy Finger that holds out nothing but *Whips and Scorpions*, as *Reboboam*'s did.

WERE there then nothing elſe to be conſidered, the Rules of Wiſdom and Prudence are ſtrong Arguments to every Man to be of an humble Mind; becauſe it carrieth with it ſuch a Ruling Power, as is beyond all the Grandeur in

the World; which may keep People in ſome little awe, and that for a little time, but cannot command their Affections. There is indeed an outward ſtate, that is neceſſary to preſerve Order and Government in the World; an external Greatneſs and Splendor, ſuitable to that high Rank and Quality wherein it pleaſeth God to place ſome far above others. Nor is this inconſiſtent with Lowlineſs of Mind: For the more and greater God's Bleſſings are, the deeper ſhould the ſenſe of them be; and, God be thanked, many times is; ſo that few, if any, are of more humble Minds, than ſome whom the Divine Providence hath dignified with the higheſt Honours. In the midſt of Pomp they can conſider what infirm Pedeſtals they ſtand on; nor are they ſo eaſily rifled of their Vertues, as thoſe whoſe ſordid Birth, and illiberal Education, expoſeth them the more to the Devils Snares. Few ſuch, God knows, keep the Humility of *Job*, after they are once raiſed from the Dunghill. But where ever this Grace grows, whether in the more barren, or in the richeſt Soil, it is always lovely to the Eye; and the more Beautiful, becauſe it reſembles him, who is ſtiled, *the Lily of the Valley*, Cant. 2. 1. We ſhould all learn of him, who was

lowly

lowly in Heart; who gained as many Admirers by his Humility, as by his other Miracles; and whoſe Example is a ſufficient Comment upon his Directions, That to ſit down in the loweſt Room is the beſt for us, the ready way to be advanced higher, and to have *worſhip in the preſence of all*, Luke 14. 10.

CHAP. III.

The Reaſonableneſs of Humility.

2. I CONFESS this is comparatively a very low Conſideration; becauſe we muſt not ſeek for Honour of Men, no more than the Lord Jeſus did; nor may we make uſe of Vertue, (eſpecially the Vertue of Humility) as an Art for it. Let us therefore in the Second place conſider the great Reaſonableneſs of this Matter; which will not only invite, but oblige us to the Practice of it.

Now here we ſhould conſider, whence we came, what we are, and what we have.

FIRST we ſhould reflect upon our Originals; becauſe People are apt to be aſhamed of their baſe beginnings; like the haughty *Simon* in *Lucian*, who being advanced to Honours, from a very mean, obſcure Condition, pull'd down the Cottage which had been the place of his Nativity, that Paſſengers might not point to it and ſay, *Here was Great* Simon *born.* The Son of God, by dignifying a Manger, hath indeed taken away all ſuch ſhame from us: But yet he left us enough, when he ſaid, *Before Abraham was I am.*

THE Father of the Faithful was once nothing. And the production of every one of us, was out of nothing. The Being we have, we are beholding for it to the Power of God, who of his own Pleaſure raiſed us out of Inanity, that our whole Life might be a ſtate of Lowlineſs, the better to diſpoſe us for entire Obedience, Submiſſion, and Reſignation of our Selves to his Divine Will.

The Fleſh we conſiſt of, and pamper ſo, what is it but *next* to nothing? A Structure of Clay and Rottenneſs, a Lump provided for Worms; an heap of Corruption,

ruption, that yields nothing but a noiſome Atmoſphere, which we are fain to correct with Spices and Odours, that Induſtry gathers out of the Fields, and are brought us from far by long and chargeable Adventures?

As vile and deſpicable things as we are, the God of Power vouchſafeth to ſupport us: We daily depend on him; and by his Law all his *Creatures*, are forced to lend us their helping hands, each doing its part for us, according to its Kind and Capacities, and all at the ſame time upbraiding us with our dependant and beggarly Condition. The Heavens beſtow their Light upon us, and put us in mind of that great Obſcurity, which wrapped us up in our Mother's Wombs. The Earth under our Feet, however we trample upon it, doth the kind office to afford us, firſt our Nurſery, and at laſt our Lodging. The thin Air we breathe in, how ſoon do we drop to the Ground, like untimely Fruit, when it is ſhut out of our Noſtrils? The Waters help to quench our thirſt, as it helps the wild Aſſes, and other Beaſts of the Field, *Pſalm* 104. 11. Poor Animals and Vegetables of infinite ſorts, are fain to be the Proveditors and Guardians of

our

our Life. Our Nakedneſs is hid by the contribution of dumb Creatures, whoſe Backs we are neceſſitated to ſtrip, that we may cover our *own*; and all this for the preſervation of that Body, which in its beſt ſtate is ſubject to variety of Diſeaſes: And which, when Death and Rottenneſs hath ſeiz'd upon it; we our ſelves cannot endure the very ſight of. Every Creature is God's Almoner, to relieve and ſuccour us whilſt we live in this World: And when we are going out of it, we have nothing to depend on, but his infinite Mercies, *in whom we now live, and move, and have our being*, Acts 17. 28.

LORD! what is Man? That poor, wretched, contemptible thing, Man? What is Man, that he ſhould ſwell and be bloated with a proud Opinion of himſelf, who can never retire into his own true ſelf, till, like a Snail that creeps into its Shell, he humbleth himſelf in Duſt and Aſhes?

DUST we are; and to Duſt ſhall we all return, like the Beaſts that periſh. And, as for that nobler part of us, the *Soul*; tho' it be a Ray of Divinity, a Spirit endued with the Powers and Faculties of an Angel; yet, upon due reflections,

flections, it will find more and greater Reasons for Humility, that may be drawn from within it self, than it sees by viewing its poor and frail habitation.

THERE are in every one of us two Prime Faculties, which are connatural to the Soul: A Faculty of knowing and reasoning, which is called the *Understanding*; and a Faculty of Acting, a Power of Chusing or Refusing, which is called the *Will*: And each of these Powers doth minister to us many humbling Considerations.

1. FIRST: For the Intellectual Faculty, or Understanding. Tho' Knowledge be a very excellent Endowment, that which People generally covet with greediness, and are too apt to value themselves upon; yet *in much wisdom is much grief; and he that increaseth knowledge, increaseth sorrow*, saith *Solomon*, Eccl. 1. 18. And yet, God was pleased of his Bounty, to give *Him* an extraordinary Portion; *exceeding much understanding and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea-shoar:* His *wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east-country, and all the wisdom of Egypt: For he was wiser than all men*, saith the Scripture, 1 *King.* 4.

It

It is not without great toil and trouble of Mind that *we* get the Knowledge we have at laſt; and even *that* is very little; conſiderable, only becauſe it coſteth us dear; nothing indeed, in compariſon of that infinite number of things Natural, Moral, and Divine, which we are ignorant of. The further we ſearch, the further ſtill we are to ſeek, and the more ſenſible of our great wants. And that which we pretend to be Maſters of, is rather conjecture than certainty, unleſs it be bottom'd upon Divine Revelation. Nor are our few Notions without a mixture of Miſtakes, and a great many Doubts and Difficulties, which diſquiet the Mind, becauſe we are not able to reſolve them. So that after many Years ſtudy and travel, we come juſt thus far, to know enough to make us very humble.

2. As for the other Faculty of the Soul, which is the Principle of Action; we find there ſo much Guilt, as we cannot be ſufficiently humbled for all the days of our Life. For, it is the *Will* that committeth Sins; 'tis this Faculty that chuſeth and conſenteth to a ſinful Action, and that makes it our Crime. The Underſtanding dictates and propoſes the thing;

thing; but ſtill it is in the Power of the Will, whether to do it, or no: And the more the Will conſents to the Sin, the more ſinful it is always. No Man can be forced to do any evil thing againſt his Will, if he be obſtinate. There may be Allurements, and ſtrong Temptations, but there can be no Compulſion. All Conſent and Compliance is from within; and for that reaſon wicked People are juſtly liable to Puniſhment, becauſe they chuſe to do that, which they might avoid: They *tranſgreſs without cauſe*, as the Expreſſion is, *Pſalm* 25. 3. Now, how can any Man think of his Sins, and be proud? Eſpecially ſince Pride is the moſt accumulative Sin of all, and deſerves Hell the more, becauſe it is after a peculiar manner the very Devil's Sin? 'Tis ſtrange that any one ſhould value himſelf for being in a ſtate of Damnation: And yet that is the ſtate every wicked Man is in, without true Repentance, or Reformation of Life; Sins acted againſt an infinite Being, muſt needs be of infinite demerit; and, conſequently, obnoxious to infinite Puniſhment. Becauſe there is a God, there muſt be an Hell too, for God to puniſh wicked People in everlaſtingly: And is it poſſible for us to be truly ſenſible of this, and at the ſame time

time not to be caſt down under the Sence of our ſad Deſervings; and of that moſt miſerable Condition, which nothing can ſave us from but the mere Mercy of God? Such Reflections as theſe, could not chuſe but be very humbling, if vain Men would not think it beneath their Spirits to admit and entertain them. It is both the Folly and Wickedneſs of haughty People, that they baniſh from them Thoughts of this Nature, and mind only trifles and things imaginary; quite over-looking thoſe Crimes, which (if attentively conſider'd) would make them *abhor themſelves, and repent in duſt and aſhes*, as *Job* ſpake, Job 42. 6. People who really believe that they deſerve eternal Damnation, and that without God's infinite Clemency they ſhall receive it, can hardly be ſo very inconſiſtent with themſelves, as to ſwell with a vain Conceit of any *other* Merits. An evil Conſcience, and a true Senſe of Guilt, is enough to lay the loftieſt Spirits low. And this is one reaſon for which Pride is concluded, by all conſiderate Men, to be ſuch a *fooliſh Vice*; Becauſe haughty People value themſelves upon things which are not valuable, not conſidering what they *juſtly* deſerve; but throwing aſide many melancholy Thoughts, which are in truth moſt

moſt proper and fit for Criminals. The only thing worth our eſteem is *Vertue*; or, that gracious diſpoſition of Soul, whereby *the righteous is* (indeed) *more excellent than his neighbour*, Prov. 12. 26. Thoſe Moral Habits which are apt to cleanſe us from all filthineſs of Fleſh and Spirit, have an intrinſick Dignity in them. For they are noble Perfections of our Nature, and ſuch reſemblances of the Divine Being, as *are in the ſight of God himſelf of great price*, 1 Pet. 3. 4. But yet even theſe excellent Endowments are arguments for our Humility; becauſe they are not the Productions of Nature, but the Fruits and Effects of the Holy Spirit's Operation. It is by his free and gracious Energy, that we are made the Children of Grace, and are tranſformed in the renewing of our Minds. Without Chriſt's aſſiſtance, by the Holy Spirit, *we can do nothing*, John 15. 5. *It is he that worketh in us, both to will, and to do of his own good pleaſure*, Phil. 2. 13. Upon this account our Spiritual Graces are reaſons for our Thankfulneſs; but not for our Pride; becauſe we ſtand indebted to the mere Goodneſs and Bounty of God for them. *Who maketh thee to differ from another?* (ſaith the Apoſtle,) *or what haſt thou that thou didſt not re-*

receive? Now if thou didſt receive it, why doſt thou glory, as though thou hadſt not received it? 1 *Cor.* 4. 7. Debtors are not wont to be proud of the Obligations and Bonds they are forced to lie under. Poverty carrieth ſuch ſhame with it, as ſerves to debaſe Men, when hardly any thing elſe will. And though *God giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not*, Jam. 1. 5. yet the Senſe of our neceſſitous and miſerable condition by Nature, and of our dependance upon God for the mending of our Fortunes, is a very powerful Motive to humble all of us; eſpecially before that infinite Being, to whoſe Bounty and Goodneſs we owe all that we have, and all that we are.

THE ancient Moraliſts among the Heathen thought it a Fundamental Principle of all Vertue, for a Man to know and underſtand himſelf rightly. I am ſure it is the Principle and Source of this Vertue, Humility. For there is very little (if any thing) in us, or about us, but what teacheth us to deſpiſe our ſelves: And it is for want of due and juſt reflection, that People are great in their own Eyes. *I know that in me, (that is in my fleſh) there dwelleth no good thing*, ſaith St. *Paul*, in the Perſon of an unregenerate

generate Man, *Rom.* 7. 18. There is indeed a vile Body, a ſinful Soul, a corrupt Mind, a vain Imagination: There is a weak, mortal, neceſſitous Nature: There is fooliſhneſs, and wretchedneſs in great variety: There is enough and abundance of *ſuch* things, for him to boaſt of, if it be worth his boaſting, (ſuch glorying would be in One's ſhame.) And, as for thoſe bleſſed Principles of Vertue, which by the ſweet and kindly inſinuations of Chriſt's Spirit, the Soul of every regenerate Perſon is endow'd with; they are ſo many borrowed Talents, for which the holieſt Man living ſtands beholding to our great Creditor, the Lord of all. And tho' we ought to rejoyce, that God is pleas'd to communicate his Riches to us, yet conſidering that they are precarious Loans, for the obtaining whereof our chief buſineſs was to beg, and receive with all Humility; we have as little reaſon to be proud of them, as a ſervile Steward hath of a Truſt for which he muſt give a ſtrict Account.

IF the things I have mention'd ſerve to keep us from all Aſſumings, the Conſideration of thoſe *outward* Matters, which the Scripture calls *the things, and the faſhion of the world*, muſt needs help

to take down our Minds the more ſtill. For, tho' the Children of this World are wont to mind theſe things moſt, and are apt to be elated moſt of all by them, yet there is hardly a plainer Argument than this is, of the great Weakneſs of humane Nature, and of the Folly it is ſubject to; that Men are ſo ſwollen in their Minds, becauſe their temporal Fortunes are bulky, becauſe they are Richer and Greater than others: I mean, as ſome count Riches and Greatneſs, who ſpeak the Dialect of the World, and conſider not what it is to be Rich and Great *indeed*. Alas! theſe external Matters are of a very mean, trifling, and contemptible Nature, phantaſm and colour only; like the Feathers of the *Athenian* Bird, which help to give it face, but do not make it better, or weightier than a Bird of a plainer Plume. Beſides, *riches* (ſaith *Solomon*) *certainly make themſelves wings, they flee away as an Eagle towards heaven*, Prov. 23. 5. And this they do by the juſt Judgment of God in Heaven; becauſe Men *ſet their Eyes on that which is not, and ſet others at nought for that which is but vanity*. When they forget God and themſelves after this manner, it is a very Righteous thing for the Judge of all the Earth, to humble them, by making the

the Neſt that was ſet on high empty; and by leaving it to the mercy of the Fire; or, of the Extortioner, which in effect is the ſame thing. Thirdly, tho' theſe external Fortunes ſtay with us, and we with them, yet 'tis moſt unreaſonable for our Hearts to be lifted up by the enjoyment of them, becauſe they are far from being an argument of God's Love to any. *No man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before them*, ſaith *Solomon*, Eccl. 9. 1. That is, none can certainly tell by his preſent worldly Condition, whether he be in God's Favour or no. For, ſaith *Solomon*, verſe 2. *All things come alike to all; there is one event to the righteous, and to the wicked; to the good, and to the clean, and to the unclean; to him that ſacrificeth, and to him that ſacrificeth not; as is the good, ſo is the ſinner; and he that ſweareth, as he that feareth an oath.* Which words yield us thus much; That, ſince this wretched World is not a place for us to receive our Rewards, generally Men ſhare alike, and without diſcrimination, in the Fortunes of the World. The Divine Providence ſcatters them promiſcuouſly, and with an indifferent Hand; which plainly ſhews, that in God's Account they are ſuch very inconſiderable things, that it is no matter how, or upon

whom they are thrown away. But, Fourthly, if any thing may be concluded from the affluence of theſe poor temporal Enjoyments, it is rather a ſad argument of the great Danger the Men of this World are in, than a ſignification of God's Love to them. For all Mankind being God's Creatures, and having for that reaſon ſome ſort of Title and Right to his Providence, God is pleaſed to diſtribute the Glories and Felicities here below, as he ſends his Rain and Sun-ſhine, *upon the evil as well as upon the good.* Nay, becauſe evil Men can have no ſhare of the Felicities of a future ſtate, God doth uſually give them a more liberal allowance of That which they count the great Happineſs of This. And hereby God ſhews the great Juſtice of his Providence, in making ſome ſort of equality in his Diſtributions, ſuch an equality as the Nature of the thing admits of; becauſe all Men by this means take their reſpective turns in the ſeveral ſtates of Happineſs and Miſery; they have their reſpective ſhares, ſuitable to their reſpective Conditions and Capacities. Wicked Wretches have their turn ſerved in this preſent ſtate; their Cup is fill'd here, ſuch a Cup as it is; and they muſt thank themſelves that there is not a better laid

up

up in ſtore for them. *They have their portion in this life*, ſaith *David*, Pſalm 17. 14. So in our Saviour's Parable of the rich Man, in *Luke* 16. *Abraham* told that glorious Epicure, repreſented there to be in Hell; *Son, remember that thou in thy life-time receivedſt thy good things, and likewiſe Lazarus* (his) *evil things*, verſe 25. But obſerve what follows; *Now Lazarus is comforted, and thou art tormented.* It was but juſt, that both the one and the other ſhould have his Portion; and, ſince it is ſo ominous to receive a large Portion in this World, certainly none have greater reaſon to be humble than they, *whoſe bellies God filleth here with his hid treaſures*, as the expreſſion is, *Pſalm* 17. 14. Such Treaſures as vain Wretches bury here in their Bowels, and in the Earth. But, laſtly, the indifferent diſtribution of theſe outward temporal matters, is a very ſtrong argument of a future Judgment, which will be according to the Rules of exact righteouſneſs. Becauſe in the preſent Adminiſtration of Affairs, the greateſt Lot many times falls to evil doers; and the Men of this World run away with the greateſt ſhare of its Wealth, Pleaſure and Honours; it is very rational to conclude, That there will be a day for an after-

reckoning, when all things ſhall be adjuſted, and all Mankind ſhall receive according to what they have done, whether it be good or evil. Then, we may be ſure, there will be no reſpect of Perſons; no diſtinction between rich and poor, between high and low; for all muſt ſtand upon the ſame level, and the only difference will be between the juſt and unjuſt. And what a terrible warning is this to the greateſt Men on Earth, not to be high minded, but to fear; becauſe their neglecting thoſe opportunities they have of doing Good is more heinous, their Ingratitude much more ſcandalous, their evil Actions more viſible, their Examples more influential, their Injuſtice more hurtful, their Yokes more heavy, their Oppreſſions more intolerable; and, conſequently their Guilt, Condemnation and Torment will be much greater, than we may ſuppoſe thoſe to be capable of incurring, who paſs through the World in a manner deſtitute and naked, as they drop'd into it. Of all People in the World, none have greater reaſon to be humble, than they who are in danger; nor are any in ſuch a dangerous condition, as flouriſhing Wretches; ſuch as *David* ſpeaks of, *Pſalm* 73. *I was* (ſaith he) *grieved at the fooliſh, when I ſaw them in ſuch*

ſuch proſperity; for they are in no peril of death; but are luſty and ſtrong. They come in no misfortune, like others; nor are they plagued, like other men. And this is the cauſe that they are ſo holden with Pride, and overwhelmed with Cruelty. *Their eyes ſwell with fatneſs; and they do even what they luſt. Lo, theſe are the ungodly; theſe proſper in the world, and theſe have riches in poſſeſſion.* 'Twere impoſſible for ſuch Men thus to ſwell in their Proſperity, did they ſadly conſider *David's* obſervation, (which we ſee verified every day,) *O! how ſuddenly do they conſume, periſh, and come to a fearful end*, verſe 18. *Haman* hanged after all his Greatneſs and Inſolence, *Eſther* 7. The preſuming Fool ſnatch'd away while he was building his capacious Barns, to ſtow up his many years Wealth in, *Luke* 12. The rich Man, I ſpoke of before, caſt out of his Purple and fine Linen into Hell torments, *Luke* 16. *Herod* ſmitten ſuddenly on his Throne, and in his Royal Apparel, *Acts* 12. Theſe, and infinite Inſtances more, ſhew what Dangers the loftieſt Men are ſurrounded with, and what ſlippery Ground they ſtand on, how great ſoever their Preſumptions are, that they ſhall never be moved.

AND, if the common danger of ruine in this World, be a reaſon to humble the haughtieſt Spirits, the moſt aſſuming and confident Minds, certainly the proſpect of a final Judgment, and an irrevocable doom to everlaſting and infinite Miſery, muſt (if duly entertained) caſt ſuch a damp upon the vain Thoughts of Men, *as is enough to ſtain the pride of all glory*, as the Prophet ſpeaks, *Iſaiah* 23. 9.

CHAP. IV.

The Uſefulneſs of Humility, in reſpect of the Peace of Mind it brings.

THE Reaſonableneſs of Humility being thus conſidered, the next thing that falls under our Meditations, and ſerves to make it practical, is the great Uſefulneſs of this Vertue, during our paſſage through this vain, deceitful World. Now there are many great Advantages which attend the ſincere and conſtant Practice of this Vertue: And more eſpecially theſe Three:

I. AN

I. AN humble Mind brings that inward Peace and Satisfaction, which is ſo much deſired by all wiſe Men.

II. IT mightily promotes Ones Progreſs and Perfection in Vertue.

III. IT is an excellent Preſervative from many great Evils and Inconveniencies, which commonly happen in this our Militant State.

I. FIRST, An humble Mind brings that inward Peace and Satisfaction, which is ſo much deſired by all wiſe Men. This tranquillity of Soul is indeed the moſt deſirable thing we are capable of on this ſide Heaven; for it is the great Happineſs of this Life; the Happineſs whereunto the Practice of Religion tendeth; the Happineſs that is a fore-taſte of the Comforts above; a Specimen of that everlaſting Reſt, which is reſerved for all that love the Lord Jeſus in ſincerity. This is ſo plain, that we need not the help of any Philoſophy to prove it. Now, of thoſe Vertues which are inſtrumental and operative in order to this Happineſs, Humility is one of the chiefeſt; becauſe it it ſets the Heart upon a Baſis, where it reſteth

reſteth quietly; ſafe and free from thoſe impetuous Paſſions, which work violently upon proud Spirits; like a Tempeſt that breaks the Cedars of *Lebanon*, but flies over the low Ground, without doing any hurt, or making much noiſe. There are ſeveral things which are apt to diſcompoſe and ruffle Mens Minds in this frail, mortal Condition: And from all theſe an humble Heart is a great ſecurity.

As, Firſt, The guilt of Sin. This is a thing that carries a very quick Senſe with it, which naturally and deſervedly diſquiets Criminals; nor is any thing ſo painful as an evil Conſcience, when once it beginneth to rage. Humility will preſerve you from this guilt; and, by conſequence, from the torment that would attend it, if you will but learn to ſubmit your ſelves to God, to his Laws, and Pleaſure in all things, as the due Conſideration of your own Meanneſs muſt needs incline you to do. An humble Heart is not apt to be lifted up againſt its Maker, nor to reſiſt and diſobey his Commands; becauſe it is conſcious of God's Greatneſs, Power, and Authority over us all; and, of that infinite Diſtance which is between his Glorious Majeſty and

and us poor Creatures, who are Worms, Earth, Vanity, nothing in compariſon. Obedience doth naturally ſpring from ſuch lowly Thoughts; and ſo that Peace and Comfort which is the Fruit of Obedience, muſt ſpring in the Mind too. In ſhort, it is that Spiritual Refreſhment and Eaſe, which our Bleſſed Saviour hath promiſed to his followers, and particularly to ſuch as follow the Example of his great Humility; *Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye ſhall find reſt unto your ſouls*, Matth. 11. 29.

2. ANOTHER thing that is wont to diſcompoſe Mens Minds, is a Senſe of Diſreſpect; we are too ready (God knows) to entertain very kind Thoughts of our own ſelves; and to expect that others ſhould think as we do, and ſhould ſhow that deference, which we fanſie to be due from abroad, becauſe we are fond of making the firſt payment of it at home. When vain Men find themſelves diſappointed, Lord! What pain and anguiſh are they in preſently! Impatient and dejected, like *Haman*, who was ſo mortifi'd by failing of one Ceremony, as if all his Enjoyments lay at *Mordecai*'s Feet. This is one great reproach of Pride, That 'tis always ready with a Rack, for thoſe who

who never think themſelves high enough: Nor are any ſo crucify'd as they who are moſt in love with this Tyrant Vice.

EVERY thing that looks like contempt, is a nail that createth freſh Torture in them: Whereas a Spirit of Humility delivers one from pains of this Nature; becauſe ſuch a Man conſiders whoſe face it was that was ſpit upon, before he endured the Croſs; and if the Son of God was ſo patient under the greateſt indignities, certainly a poor ſinful Man hath reaſon when the right Cheek is uſed Contumelioufly, to turn the left alſo, though the diſgrace be never ſo provoking. But in this caſe an humble Perſon finds not ſufficient *cauſe* of diſturbance, becauſe he is ſuppoſed to be deſpicable in his own Eyes; and if he thinks his Eyes do not deceive him, how is it a provocation that he is ſo in the Eyes of others too? Their agreement in the ſame opinion is matter not of trouble, but of complacency rather, becauſe each Party believes his opinion to be right. If to expoſe thee, People proclaim ſome of thy faults, do not ſtand upon thy defence (ſaith *Epictetus*) as if they did thee wrong; but ſay only, they are ignorant People; for if they knew all thy faults, they would not have mentioned theſe alone.

lone. By ſuch a modeſt turn of the hand 'tis eaſie to wipe off the fouleſt Spittle, before it ſinks into the breaſt. And beſides, the Humble Man conſiders what Mouth it came from: For, Applauſe from ſome Mens lips may be conſtru'd as a Libel; and many times we may well be jealous, as *Socrates* was wont to be, that he had done ſomething amiſs, when he was reſpected and commended by ill Men: The deſpitefulneſs of ſuch brings this great comfort with it, *That there is no preſent danger of that woe, which we have reaſon to be afraid of, when all Men ſpeak well of us*, Luc. 6. 26.

FURTHER yet; Whoever the Men, whatever the Diſreſpect be, and what impreſſions ſoever it makes, it ſits the eaſier upon an Humble Man's mind, becauſe he takes it as a means of making him the more Humble ſtill: For lowly hearts are apt to miſtruſt, that they are never lowly enough; and therefore, when any thing happens, which helps to abaſe them, whether it be deſerved or no, it is not unwelcome, becauſe it is of very good uſe, and may have been miniſtred by the hand of God for the good Man's particular advantage. Thus *David* took it when *Shimei* curſed him, and threw ſtones

at

at him: *So let him Curſe, ſaid the King, becauſe the Lord hath ſaid unto him, Curſe* David, 2 *Sam.* 16. 10. And when we make ſuch a Religious conſtruction of Affronts and Contumelies, as things intended for our good; and ſuch a Religious uſe of them, as to be better'd and made more Humble by them, they muſt needs loſe that Acrimony and Gall which is ſo very diſtaſtful and grievous to proud Men who want the Divine Art of altering the Waters of *Marah*, ſo as to deſtroy their bitterneſs.

3. A third thing that too often diſquiets Mens minds, is the great Proſperity of others as to their outward Fortunes; becauſe in the diſtribution of theſe Temporal Bleſſings, the Divine Providence doth not obſerve the Rules of exact Equality: People whoſe condition is much lower than their Neighbours, look upon thoſe above them with an evil Eye, grow impatient, fretful, and querulous, becauſe (forſooth) the ſame liberal and open hand is not extended unto themſelves. Such greedy and reaching deſires can never be without great vexation of Spirit, eſpecially when Induſtry and Ambition have made many unſucceſsful attempts to get higher. In which caſe,

nothing

nothing certainly can be ſuch a ſpeedy and effectual relief to the Soul to give it Peace and Reſt, as true Humility. The firſt thought that is naturally incident to an Humble Man, is, That as all Right is in God, the great and ſole Proprietary, who hath an indiſputable Power to do what he *pleaſeth with his own*, Matth. 20. 15. So the greateſt Title we can pretend to, is that of Uſufructuaries; Tenants at Will in every reſpect (though in this caſe the Tenure be for Lives too, as precarious a Tenure as the other) and for ſuch entire dependants to be envious at the Divine œconomy, is the moſt impious unthankfulneſs, when we have all of us as little reaſon to murmur, as we have capacity to Pay, or power to Demand. Again, as we depend upon God for all that we have, ſo we muſt acknowledge, that whatſoever that be, is more than we deſerve. And this humble conſideration that God is our abſolute Sovereign, but not our Debtor, is another ſtrong reaſon for us to acquieſce, and be content with our Portion; becauſe, though it be not as great as other Mens, yet it is enough to make us not only ſatisfied, but thankful. *Lord*, ſaid Jacob, *I am not worthy of the leaſt of all the Mercies, which thou haſt ſhewed unto thy Servant: With my Staff I paſſed*

paſſed over Jordan, and now I am become two bands, Gen. 32. 10.

THIRDLY, Humility teacheth us to conſider, that whatſoever our Condition is, it is that which is beſt and fitteſt for us. Of this, indeed, we our ſelves are not competent Judges, becauſe our Underſtandings are as weak as our Deſires are unreaſonable; and were our Fortunes in our own hands, our partiality and ignorance would make us the very worſt Carvers of them; God knows beſt what we moſt need; and that alone is proper, which he ſees to be neceſſary and convenient: And therefore the mere Light of Nature directed *Socrates* when he prayed, to implore the Divine Goodneſs in general terms, leaving it to God to chuſe for him, how, and when, and what to beſtow upon him; believing it to be a Man's ſafeſt courſe to ſubmit always to the Wiſdom and Determinations of God. But you will ſay, Was not *David* envious at the Proſperity of the wicked? Yes; he tells us himſelf that he was ſo, and that in his diſcontented, ſullen humour, he muttered, as if he had cleanſed his Heart in vain, and had waſh'd his Hands in Innocency, (to no purpoſe;) but he tells us too, that in all this

this he behaved himſelf very fooliſhly, *and like a beaſt*, Pſalm 73. 22. The truth is, this is one of the moſt affecting Caſes, when we ſee thoſe whom we take to be very ill Men, to thrive at a mighty rate, and to grow great and powerful in the World. Nevertheleſs, Humility teacheth us in all Caſes, not to take Example by any, ſo as to be Uncharitable or Irreligious. The humble Man's Rule is that, *Phil.* 2. 3. *In lowlineſs of mind, let each eſteem other better than themſelves.* I know the Apoſtle's meaning to be, That we ſhould behave our ſelves to others, *as if* they were better, whether they be really ſo, or not. Such a Judgment of the Mind is not always required; and, if ſometimes we think it impoſſible too, for the humbleſt Perſon in the World, to think all others better, it is yet inconſiſtent with Humility to judge them worſe; for God alone is the ſearcher of the Heart: That is in too cloſe a Repoſitory for One's next Neighbour to penetrate into; and therefore to make wrong judgment of *others*, is too facil a thing, even for good Men, who are apt to take falſe eſtimates of *themſelves*, with whom they ſhould be far better acquainted. Such humble Thoughts as theſe do naturally prompt Men, evermore to make very charitable

Judgments; and, conſequently, to reſt ſatisfied in their Minds, when the Divine Providence doth multiply and heap up the good things of this life upon the Heads of others. But to put the Caſe at the very worſt; Suppoſe the Men, thus judged and cenſured, to be wicked indeed, (I mean, wicked in the ſtrict Scripture-ſence; guilty of great, ſcandalous, preſumptuous Sins:) This is, in truth, an Argument for our Prayers, and charitable Admonitions; but not for Envy; nor are any People in the World more to be pitied than ſuch.

4. By this ſhort Account it appears, what an uſeful Vertue Humility is, to rid our Minds of all fooliſh impatience, and to compoſe them into a ſerene and calm ſtate, how invidious ſoever the Condition and Circumſtances of others may be. Let us conſider now, Fourthly, the Advantage it brings an humble Man, how perplexed ſoever his own Condition is. There are many croſs, calamitous Accidents in this life, which we cannot digeſt under any one General Head ſo well as under the common name of *Afflictions*; ſo called, becauſe they give very painful *blows* to the Hearts of ſuch People, as are not in ſome good meaſure improved and

and perfected by the Diſcipline of Religion. And theſe Afflictions are of two ſorts; ſome that are actually felt; and others that we fear: Both are dolorous; for though preſent Afflictions yield the quickeſt ſenſe, yet many times future ones create the moſt melancholy pain; nay, the bare apprehenſion and proſpect of them, when at ſome diſtance uſually makes longer and deeper impreſſions upon Mens Minds, than when they are engaged and wreſtling with them in a direct Conflict. In each of theſe Caſes, Humility affords the beſt Auxiliaries; ſo that how lowly and ſubdued ſoever One's *Heart* is, he can lift up his *Head* in the day of diſtreſs. *Firſt*, As to preſent Afflictions: There are theſe Four Conſiderations, which naturally ſerve to make every humble Chriſtian very eaſie (if not chearful) in his own Mind.

1. THAT though ſecond Cauſes be the immediate inſtruments of Affliction, yet the Hand of God doth ſo order, govern and direct them, that we are ſtill under his management in all Conditions. And ſince it is ſo, what can ſo well become a lowly Mind, as that modeſt reſignation which old *Eli* expreſs'd, 1 *Sam.* 3. 18. *It is the Lord, let him do what ſeem-*

eth him good. Doeſt thou well to be angry? As the great Governor of the World was pleaſed to argue with *Jonah*, when he was in his ſullen fits; firſt, becauſe *Nineveh* was not deſtroy'd, and then becauſe his friendly Gourd was ſmitten with a Worm, *Jonah* 4. By which mild Expoſtulation God ſhews, that whether he ſpares, or deſtroys, ſtill 'tis our Duty to acquieſce in his Divine Pleaſure; and that it is the *fooliſhneſs of man, which makes his heart fret againſt the Lord*, as *Solomon* obſerves, *Prov.* 19. 3. *Secondly*, Whether God afflicteth Men by the Hands of others, or with his own Hands, and by his immediate Providence, it muſt be acknowledged, that the Judge of all the Earth doth ſtill do Right. Conſidering the ſcandalous Provocations which are given by ſome, the heinous, though ſecret Crimes which are acted by others, the Faults which the beſt are guilty of, and the Corruption of Heart which is in all, none can reaſonably expect to ſteal out of this World without a Rod upon his Back; or, at leaſt without ſome Thorn or other in his Fleſh: (You know, a Sword was to pierce through the Soul of the bleſſed Virgin her ſelf, *Luke* 2. 35.) The humble will conſider this; and the due Conſideration of it muſt needs ſtop his

his Mouth, and quiet his Mind, in reference to God's Proceedings, becauſe he cannot but be ſenſible, that his Sufferings are the conſequent of his Offences, and that too which falls ſo very ſhort of them, that if we will put both into the Scales, and then judge by weight, the burden that is in one Scale, how heavy ſo ever it may ſeem, is really very light, hardly any thing in compariſon of thoſe Demerits which by a vaſt preponderation bear and keep down the other. Humility directs us in all Caſes to reflect not ſo much upon our Grievances, as our Guilt: And, if People in Affliction would take this ſafe and prudent courſe, there would be no room nor reaſon for any ſorrow of Heart, beſides that which worketh Repentance unto Salvation. *Wherefore doth a living man complain? a man for the puniſhment of his ſins?* ſaith *Jeremy*, Lam. 3. 39. *Thirdly*, In viſiting Mens Offences with a Rod, God doth not act purely as a Judge, but rather with the Wiſdom and Tenderneſs of a Father; either to keep his Children ſtill within the limits of their Duty, or to reclaim them from their Aberrations. Outward Eaſe is naturally apt to corrupt good Manners, as fulneſs and idleneſs is apt to vitiate the Blood, and to ruine

One's whole Conſtitution. Therefore, to exerciſe the Soul, and thereby to preſerve it in the right ſtate, God doth commonly uſe ſuch a meaſure of ſeverity, as he knows we ſtand in need of; and when a Man makes an application of this to himſelf, after an humble manner, he cannot but be ſatisfied with the Apoſtle's argument, *Heb.* 12. 9, 20. *If we have had fathers of our fleſh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence, ſhall we not much rather be in ſubjection to the Father of Spirits, and live? For they verily, for a few days chaſtened us after their own pleaſure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holineſs.* For this gracious purpoſe ſake, they who are conſcious to themſelves of their Deſerts and Wants (as all humble Perſons are) cannot but poſſeſs their Souls in Patience under the Hand that correcteth; and with Thankfulneſs too, for ſtripes which are thus profitable and advantageous to them; not only hearing the Rod, as the Prophet ſpeaks, *Micah* 3. 9. but kiſſing it alſo, becauſe there is Honey on the end of it, as there was on the top of *Jonathan's* Rod, 1 *Sam.* 14. *Fourthly*, and laſtly, St. *Paul* gives this Character of Temptation, (meaning Affliction) *that it is common to man*, 1 *Cor.* 10. 13. And con-

conſidering that it is a general Lot, the humble in Soul will ſit down quiet, and well contented to have a ſhare: *For how*, (ſays he) *am I better than my neighbours?* Indeed, it is no comfort to good Nature, to ſee others in miſery; yet every Man's Grief is much the leſs, when Diſcipline is adminiſtred impartially; and of all others, the humble Man's ſatisfaction is the greateſt, when comparing his Sins and his Sufferings with other Mens, he findeth ſo vaſt a diſproportion; as if God were particularly merciful to him, in viſiting more, and (as he thinks) more *heinous* Offences, with fewer and leſs-afflicting Stripes. It is one great cauſe of Murmurs and Impatience, that we look at the Proſperity, not at the Misfortunes of other People; at leaſt, that we do not lay them equally to Heart: Their glittering Condition ſtrikes the tendereſt Side, and there makes the deepeſt impreſſions. The ſenſe of their Afflictions goes off with an eaſie, and too often with a pleaſant ſlide; eſpecially where Nature is too hard for Religion. But were our Humility commenſurate to St. *Paul's*, when he owned himſelf *leſs than the leaſt of all Saints*, Epheſ. 3. 8. nay, *the chiefeſt of ſinners*, 1 *Tim.* 1. 15. 'Twere impoſſible for us to be very uneaſie un-

der our Afflictions, could we be able to give in ſuch a large Regiſter of them, as he gives of his own, 2 *Cor.* 11. In the midſt of which we find him ſtill rejoycing. In ſhort, he that is vile and worthleſs in his own eſtimate, cannot but learn in what ſtate ſoever he is, therewith to be content; unleſs he will be ſo falſe to himſelf, as to condemn his own Opinion, and reverſe his own Judgment. Which ſufficiently demonſtrates, what an ineſtimable Bleſſing Humility is to the Soul, amidſt all the various and troubleſome incumbrances of this Life. At once it poliſheth our Nature, and refreſheth us with Delights; that is, it doth us all the Good that we are capable of enjoying in a mortal ſtate. There is ſuch an indiſſoluble Union between this Vertue and Felicity, that it is impoſſible for a Man to be truly Humble, but he muſt, in ſpight of Fortune, be very Happy too.

2. I told you before, That of all Afflictions, thoſe which we pretend to diſcern aloof off, do many times affect the Mind with the greateſt Anguiſh: And at the cloſe of this Conſideration, touching that Peace and Comfort wherewith Humility endues the Heart, it will be ne-

neceſſary to obſerve, how advantageous this Vertue is, when a Calamity threatens and looks terrible at a diſtance. In this Caſe there are three things eſpecially which Humility ſuggeſteth to our Minds, for the eaſe and ſatisfaction of them.

1. FIRST, Our whole dependance being upon the Care of that infinite Being, who is the Governor and Diſpoſer of all things, we may be ſure, that nothing can befal us contrary unto, or without his Pleaſure: So that tho' we are little, contemptible things of our ſelves, yet conſidering whoſe Creatures we are, and whoſe Hands we are in, it is our Duty in all ominous Circumſtances to commit our ſelves to God, with ſuch reſignation and recumbency as becomes the Condition of poor, ſhiftleſs Beings, that are left entirely to him, and hang every minute upon his Providence.

2. SECONDLY, God being infinitely Wiſe, Governing and Ordering every part of the Univerſe with conſtant Reſpect to the Whole, it is our Wiſdom to acquieſce in our Lots, as God ſhall pleaſe to diſpenſe them, and to make his bleſſed Will our Choice; in regard that we our ſelves are ſo very ſhort-ſighted and par-

partial, that we are not fit to be our own chuſers, becauſe we do not know what we *ſhould*, but crave only for what we *would* have.

3. THIRDLY, However Events prove, it is not out of our power to make an Honeſt and Religious uſe of them; and then all things ſhall *work together for good to them that love God*, Rom. 8. 28. Theſe humble Conſiderations muſt needs miniſter great Reſt and Comfort to One's Soul, tho' future Contingencies carry with them a terrible aſpect; and thereby the reaſonableneſs and excellence of our Duty appears, of taking no anxious, carking Thoughts about to morrow. Becauſe God preſideth over all, many things which we preſage, do not happen (Clouds uſually drop before they advance over our heads) and how can the humble Man anſwer it to his own mind, to crucifie himſelf before-hand, for that which, for ought he knows, may never come to to paſs? Becauſe God is infinitely Wiſe and Good, who can tell certainly what is within the Cloud? Or, whether many *Bleſſings* may not fall down together with the Storm? It is inconſiſtent with Humility to pry into God's Counſels after a diſtruſtful manner; and, conſequently, to

to perplex One's Heart with a grievous apprehenſion of accidents, which perhaps may be for his great advantage: Or, ſay it be a *real* Calamity that is coming, it is an humble Man's part to leave God to his own time, and to wait God's leiſure, without going forward to meet an Evil, which he is bound to be patient under, but not to anticipate. *Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof*, ſaid the humble Jeſus, *Matth.* 6. 34.

TO enforce the practice of Chriſtianity as to this particular, I cannot but obſerve what Religious Principles ſome Heathen Moraliſts went on, who placed Happineſs in the ſtudy and exerciſe of Vertue, becauſe it is the only thing which bleſſeth a Man's Soul with Satisfaction and Tranquillity. By the Light of Nature they diſcover'd three great Truths, which they proved too, and urged the belief of them, as abſolutely neceſſary to a Man's Happineſs.

1. THAT there is a God; or, (as they themſelves mean) a Sovereign, Incorporeal, Intellectual Being, that is Uncompounded, Independent, Self-exiſtent, Self-moving; the moſt Abſolute and Perfect Good, the Supreme and firſt Cauſe of all things. 2. SE-

2. SECONDLY, That as God exactly knoweth all the things he hath made, and hath a Power over all, ſo he taketh care of the whole Univerſe, and the ſeveral parts of it, the meaneſt Creatures not excepted.

3. THIRDLY, That God doth not only inſpect the World, but doth moreover adminiſter and govern all Affairs, according to the ſtrict Rules of Goodneſs and Righteouſneſs. From which Principles thoſe wiſe Philoſophers concluded, That as it is our Duty to honour and worſhip God, ſo we muſt ſet our ſelves to Obey him, to ſubmit to his Determinations, to follow his Conduct with chearfulneſs, to acquieſce in his Pleaſure, and to be well-pleaſed with what he doth, as being the Reſult of his Divine Wiſdom and Providence. If you do no diſpoſe your Minds thus, your Lives (ſay they) will be not only Irreligious, but full of Sadneſs and Miſery too: Whereas, if you reſign your Wills to God's, and be contented with Events, as God ſhall pleaſe to order them, you will be happy. Therefore *Socrates* was wont to ſay, *If God will have it thus, then thus let it be.* And *Epictetus* his Prayer was, *Lead me, O God,*

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according to thy Will, and I will readily obey, and ſubmit to thy Providence. For (ſays *Arrian*) *every good Man who believes there is a Deity and a Providence, will ſubmit his own Mind to God's Pleaſure, the Governour of the Univerſe, as good Citizens ſubmit to the Laws of the City they live in.*

Concerning all this ſee Epictetus, cap. 38, 77, 79. Arrian *on* Epictet. lib. 1. c. 12. *and eſpecially* Simplicius *his Comments* 38. per totum.

THESE were great Notions for Heathens to entertain; ſuch a complexure of good Divinity and Morality together, as one would think were the Sence of a Chriſtian. And the reſult of the whole matter is this; That as all the Happineſs of this Life is lodged in Vertue; ſo this Vertue of Humility doth contribute towards it after a more eſpecial manner, and in a ſingular degree; becauſe it reſigneth up the Soul to God's Wiſdom and Pleaſure in all Conditions; ſo that in all afflicting Circumſtances, whether actually felt, or apprehended only, the truly humble Perſon poſſeſſeth his Soul in Patience, and is bleſs'd with Tranquillity in as great meaſures, as a frail Nature is capable of receiving. Such as are ſo proud, that they care not for the Almighty, and think themſelves too big for his Rod, in times of trial and diſtreſs, aggravate the

the smart from without, by being their own tormentors within, and the most inhumane tormentors, because the Pains they inflict are hardly curable, and seldom intermitting. Every odd chance is magnified into a great Affliction; and every Affliction gnaws and eats, as if it were an affront to their singular Merits, and an argument of Injustice and Partiality in the Divine Providence. And thus the Spirits of such vain Wretches breed Worms, which like those engendred in a dead Carcase, never leave till they have devoured their Parent; and all at last produce the Worm which dieth not.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

The Uſefulneſs of Humility, in reſpect of our Proficiency in Vertue.

HITHERTO I have conſider'd the Uſefulneſs of Humility, in reſpect of that Contentment and Serenity of Mind, which is the bleſſed Fruit of it. Let us proceed now to the next thing, and obſerve how inſtrumental it is, in order to our Progreſs and Perfection in Vertue: Now there are very many ways, whereby it helpeth to promote this ineſtimable Advantage: But it will be ſufficient for me to take notice of theſe Four ways following.

1. FIRST, By obliging us to reſt in the Authority of Divine Revelation. This is the Foundation of our Faith and Hopes, and of thoſe Religious Endeavours, we are encouraged to uſe, that we may receive the end of them: All is bottom'd on this Principle, That the things we believe and look for, are certain, becauſe God hath revealed them; and 'tis Humility that concurs with right Reaſon

ſon to ſettle our Souls upon this Principle, how dark and doubtful ſoever ſome things may ſeem to humane Apprehenſions. The daily Senſe which all humble Men have of the weakneſs and fallaciouſneſs of their own Underſtandings, is ſufficient to convince them, that Carnal Reaſon is not to be truſted Univerſally, and with Confidence in things pertaining unto God; and that it is our Wiſdom as well as Duty, to take God's Word for all, however the Word ſpoken may ſound in our Ears. This is a great Fault in ſome pretenders to Reaſon, that they will not allow us to believe Doctrines, unleſs they *appear* rational as to all the Parts and Modes of thoſe Matters which are propoſed to our Belief; and unleſs they captivate our Faith, by ſuiting with our Capacities, and by carrying with them a plain Evidence, *How* thoſe things can be. This proceeds from Spiritual Pride, and Self-conceit, and is the ready way to make Reaſon not an Aſſiſtant, but an Idol, for the *Holy Bible* to be offer'd up unto. Humble Men will tell you, That many things in Religion are and ought to be cover'd with a Veil; that it is not Modeſty to pry without Light, or without Leave, or beyond the reach of our finite Faculties; that Myſteries ought

ought to be let alone, and ſuffer'd to remain Myſteries; that *ſecret things belong unto the Lord our God; and that thoſe things which are revealed, belong unto us, and to our children for ever*, Deut. 29. 29. And thus our Faith will be infallible and unſhaken, our Hope firm, and our progreſs in a courſe of Religion will be ſteddy, which otherwiſe may be fatally interrupted by our turning aſide into mazes and labyrinths, with a deſign to diſcover things, which God in his Wiſdom hath purpoſely hid from us.

2. THAT in this courſe of Religion we may not travel with a Tympany, full of hopes that will at laſt deceive, and make us aſhamed; we are taught, that beſides a modeſt Faith, univerſal Obedience to the Divine Will is neceſſarily required; and this is another improvement that comes by an humble Mind; it diſpoſeth the Soul to perfect Holineſs in the fear of God; and not only to rely upon the Veracity, but to have an Eye alſo to the Authority of God; that tranſcendent Authority which is ſtamped upon his Laws. Conſidering that he is our Supreme, Abſolute, and only Wiſe Legiſlator; that we were all made for his Glory; that we have no urgent buſineſs

in the World, but to glorifie him; that he is glorifi'd in our Happineſs, and that his Laws are intended to fit and prepare us for it; what other Thoughts can an humble Mind ſuggeſt, but that it is at once our Duty and our Intereſt to ſerve God in true Holineſs and Righteouſneſs before him all the days of our lives? Such lowly Thoughts are apt to be ſeconded with ſuitable Reſolutions; and thence proceed thoſe various acts of Godlineſs, Righteouſneſs, and Sobriety, which are anſwerable to the Commands of the Lord and Saviour of the World. For which reaſon the Ancients in their Encomiums of Humility, frequently ſtyle it, *The Foundation, the Original, the Root, the Mother of all Vertue, and the great Preſerver of it:* Becauſe a ſubmiſs diſpoſition of Soul is naturally pliant, and never more obediential than when the Pleaſure and Will of God is to be done. The adoring Senſe of the glorious Nature, Attributes, and Works of God, on the Contemplation whereof the humble Man's Mind is fix'd; the apprehenſion of his infinite Greatneſs and Majeſty; the thoughts of his Abſolute Power and Authority over all; the amazing and profound Conſideration of his free Goodneſs and Love, eſpecially in Redeeming our miſerable Souls

Souls from eternal Ruine, and in beſtowing on us ſuch Spiritual and Divine Bleſſings, as are Arguments of our Adoption, the Preparatives and Earneſt of a moſt bleſſed future Eſtate: Theſe things carry ſuch a charming Power over a meek and lowly Heart, as is productive of the moſt chearful and affectionate Obedience to the Mind and Pleaſure of God in all things.

3. THIRDLY, As Humility fits us for an entire and hearty compliance with God's Commands; ſo it poſſeſſeth us with a genuine ſence of our own Defects and Wants; which is another way whereby it helpeth our progreſs and perfection in Vertue. For this is neceſſary to all manner of Improvements, that we ſee firſt wherein we are defective. That Obſervation of *Seneca*, *That many might be very wiſe in time, but that they fooliſhly think themſelves wiſe enough already*, will hold true in all Caſes: Men might eaſily be better Artiſts, better Scholars, better Chriſtians than they are, if a falſe Opinion of their Accompliſhments did not ſuperſede their Induſtry. And this is apparently the miſchievous effect of Pride, That it ſhuts a Man (as it were) out of himſelf; makes him uncapable of find-

ing out that blind side, and ugly temper, which requires help, but admits of none for want of discovery. And the reason is, because such Men take not a clear and fair view; they overlook those manifold faults which deserve their Eye, and contemplate only those glittering Objects which dazle it. Hence it comes to pass, that a great many flaws within them escape their observation; and they are no Proficients, because they are not properly Teachers, but Admirers of themselves, only; lifted up with the Vanity and Confidence of those our Saviour pointed to who trusted in themselves, *that they were righteous, and despised others*, Luke 18.9. That humble Apostle who confest his Sins to the whole World, and proclaimed himself the chiefest of Sinners, counted all things but loss for the Excellency of the Knowledge of Christ Jesus: And tho' he spake as if he were blameless, as touching Righteousness which was by the Law, yet he threw aside all that Righteousness of his own; not conceiving that he had already attained, or was already perfect, but following after, (stretching and straining hard, like those that contended of old in the famous *Agonistical* Combats) forgetting those things which were behind,

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he reached forth unto thoſe things which were before, preſſing *towards the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus*, Phil. 3. As many as are perfectly humble, will be thus minded; thus zealous to run and to finiſh their courſe well. Becauſe they are conſcious of their former Miſcarriages, of their preſent Infirmities, Defects, Unworthineſs, Encumbrances, and natural proneneſs to Slip and Fall; they know the better what Care to take, what Temptations they are to avoid, what Weights they are to lay aſide, what aids of Grace they are to pray for, and what Supplies are moſt neceſſary for them. They are always jealous over themſelves with Godly Jealouſie; ſtill fearing leſt as the Serpent beguiled Eve, through his Subtilty, ſo their Minds ſhould be corrupted from the Simplicity that is in Chriſt. They think their Sins can never be mortified enough, nor their Hearts be clean enough, nor their Repentance fruitful enough, nor their Devotion ardent enough, nor their Charity great enough, nor any other acts of Religion worthy enough of his gracious Acceptance, who loved them, and gave himſelf for them. Theſe are ſo far from being Diſcouragements, that they are great Motives to a courſe of Proficiency.

ency. For tho', when we have done all, we must acknowledge our selves unprofitable Servants, and come short of our Duty, tho' our Minds and Endeavours be sincere; yet considering, that not so much as a Cup of cold Water loseth its Reward, and considering the great Goodness of the Lord Jesus, who is pleased with what we are able to do, (as he said of that Woman who anointed his Head, *Mark* 14. *She hath wrought a good work on me: She hath done what she could*; considering this, I say) the meanest Performances must afford such a comfortable Prospect, as will invite the humble to proceed from Vertue to Vertue, while all the Pomp of proud Men, with their stiff Necks and inflexible Hearts, serves only to alienate their Minds from Religion by degrees, till they come to that high pitch of Insolence which *David* speaks of, *Psalm* 10. 4. *The wicked through the pride of his countenance will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts.*

4. FOURTHLY, An humble Mind helps Men on in their Christian Progress, by preparing and inclining them to use the *means* of Holiness.

THE means of Holiness I now speak of, are Prayer, Sacraments, and Instruction.

1. FIRST,

1. FIRST, For Prayer: It is a great Inſtrument of Grace. *If any of you lack wiſdom* (ſaith St. *James*) *let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it ſhall be given him*, James 1. 5. And this may be one reaſon, why the ſame Apoſtle tells us, *Chap.* 4. 6. *God giveth grace to the humble*; that is, more Grace, greater meaſures of Divine Aſſiſtance, than he gives to others; becauſe they are of a more devout Spirit, more ready for any opportunities of Praying, more conſtant, and fervent, and importunate at their Devotion. The want of this pious Diſpoſition proceeds, not more from an earthly, heavy Temper, than from a ſecret Principle of Pride; from a faſtidious Mind in People, which makes Religion hang ſo looſe about them, that every puff of Wind carries it away? 'Tis a ſign they have contemptuous Thoughts of God, who make ſo ſlight of his Service, as if to honour him, to worſhip him, and to bow down before him, were a precarious matter. To fold our Arms in a ſoft Bed, when we ſhould be proſtrate in our Cloſets; to rove about, when the Church wants us; or, to be buſie about many things at home, when we ſhould repair to the Con-

gregation, and take a ſhare with thoſe who chuſe the better part: This looks as if we thought Almighty God beholding to us for our Service. And ſo, an indifferent ſort of carriage *in* the Houſe of God, when we meet together for Prayer, a wandring Eye, impertinent Talk, a ſtiff Knee, an irreverent Geſture: This looks as if we counted our bare attendance in the Church, Civility and Favour rather than Obedience: I am ſure it is not ſuitable to the Temper of thoſe humble Souls, who reckon no Ground too vile, no Poſture too lowly, no Thoughts too awful, no Adoration too profound in the Preſence of that Great God, who *ſearcheth the very heart and reins.* And how can it be expected, that People who thus bear themſelves on high, ſhould make any good improvements in Religion? Or, that they ſhould perfect Holineſs in the fear of God, who deſpiſe even the outward Beauty of it? How can it be expected, that they ſhould receive the Influences of Grace, who ſhut their Boſoms (as it were) againſt them? That they ſhould be truſted with a Divine Treaſure, who carry themſelves as if they were rich enough, and had need of nothing? Or, that they ſhould be bleſs'd with the Dew of Heaven, who are inſolently ſupine,

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as if they had the Fortune of *Gideon*'s Fleece, to be full of Water, whilſt the neighbouring Ground was dry. So proud People count others in compariſon; and yet thoſe humble Hearts that are a-thirſt for God, and cry unto him like the parched Land, are more receptive of Diſtillations from above, and much the more fruitful by them. God heareth their Cries; and, as a return of their Prayers, refreſheth them with increments of his Grace and Goodneſs; ſo that they proceed from Strength to Strength, from Vertue to Vertue, from one degree of Grace unto another.

2. SECONDLY, As an humble Mind prompts Men to be diligent and devout at their Prayers, ſo it inclines them to communicate often at the Altar; which is another means of Holineſs. Becauſe this Sacrament was of our bleſſed Saviour's own appointment, and that too a little before he humbled himſelf (even to the Death of the Croſs;) becauſe he was pleas'd to inſtitute it for a ſtanding Memorial of his great Love to Mankind, in dying for all: And becauſe he ſaid, (pointing to the Cup) *Do this, as oft as ye ſhall drink it, in remembrance of me.* The Chriſtian Church hath in all times held

held this Solemnity in the greateſt Eſteem and Veneration, as being a Chriſtian Ordinance in the ſtricteſt Senſe, and after a more peculiar manner; and ſuch was the Humility of Chriſtians (in the ancient Times eſpecially,) that for fear they ſhould not celebrate it often enough, they did it daily. And certainly, were our Humility as deep as theirs, our Obedience and Zeal as to this, would bear an equal proportion; as none would think themſelves to be above Ordinances, or without need of Ordinances, ſo as to ſlight this; ſo very few would hardly once omit it, being ſuch a Sacred and Solemn part of Chriſt's Religion, eſpecially conſidering how mightily the uſe of it promotes our Progreſs and Perfection in Vertue. Here we renew our Baptiſmal Vows: Here we repeat all acts of Mortification and Repentance: Here we exerciſe our Faith and Hope with the greateſt vigour: Here we enliven and extend our Charity to all Mankind: Here we are taken up with the Contemplation and Adorations of God: Here we exert all thoſe Spiritual Graces, which God gives us upon our devout Prayers. So that were this Ordinance religiouſly and conſtantly uſed, according to the Original deſign and purpoſe of our Saviour,

nothing

nothing could conduce more to our preſent and future Happineſs, than this bleſſed Myſtery, ſo perfective it is of all manner of Vertue. The lowly in Heart cannot but think themſelves obliged to be frequent Attendants at the Lord's-Table; what neglects, what contempt ſoever Men of unſubdued Spirits may be guilty of, People of an humble and truly Chriſtian Diſpoſition, make a Conſcience of this their Duty, and are afraid of violating ſuch an expreſs, ſuch a plain Command; eſpecial of living in the habitual and ſcandalous violation of it. They conſider the infinite Love of the Lord Jeſus, who gave himſelf for them; how equal it is, to expreſs here their Thankfulneſs to him; how pleaſant, as well as frail the Duty is, and what infinite difference there is between This Cup, and that which our bleſſed Saviour drank of for us in his Agony, and upon the Croſs. They think of thoſe Bleſſings which reward the Piety of every devout Soul, and are ſenſible of their want of them. They impatiently deſire the Pardon of all their Sins, and that Supply of Grace, wherewith the Holy Spirit refreſheth the Hearts of all Worthy Communicants. And when the Solemnity is tranſacted, their daily care is to order their whole Converſation

versation so, that they may not have received the Grace of God in vain. These are genuine Fruits of Humility; and they all shew, how effectually this single Vertue serves to carry on the great Ends and Purposes of Christianity.

3. THE Third thing I mentioned as a means of Holiness, is Instruction. For, how sincere so ever our Hearts may be, our Understandings are subject to so many Mistakes and Errors, that good Guides are very necessary to inform us; tho' some think they do not need them at all. This is no other than Pride of Heart; nor do any stand in such great need of skilful and honest Guides, as those who think they are able enough to guide themselves. *Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? There is more hope of a fool than of him*, saith *Solomon*, Prov. 26. 12. Such a Man hearkeneth to himself; and being in the hands of such a weak and flattering Tutor, no good Proficiency can be expected from him: He will ever be crooked, because he grows, leaning every minute on the left-side. 'Tis hardly possible ever to set such an unlucky piece of a Man right, without such a Miracle as in our Saviour's time cured the Blind and the Lame. His Knowledge and

and Perfection, are ſo great in his own Eyes, that the pretending to rectifie Faults is interpreted, either as Ignorance that is inexcuſable, becauſe he is known no better; or, as Malice and ill Nature, for endeavouring to fix a dark part there, which he thought ſplendid; which way ſo ever it be taken, the proud Man thinks himſelf diſgraced; he is therefore affronted, becauſe he is above Reproof or Advice: And thus the means of making him better and wiſer are quite fruſtrated. Therefore for our Progreſs and Perfection in a Chriſtian courſe, it is a moſt neceſſary Rule, which St. *Paul* gives us all to go by; *Let none think of himſelf more highly than he ought to think; but think ſoberly.* An humble Mind is tractable and docil; for the very Notion of Humility includes a mean and ſlender Opinion of One's own ſelf, and conſidering thoſe Commands, that *in honour we ſhould preferr one another*, Rom. 12. 10. and eſteem each other better than our ſelves, *Phil.* 1. 3. Nothing can be more agreeable to a Spirit of true Humility, than to hearken to thoſe, whoſe Place and Office it is, by God's appointment, to direct and inform us, eſpecially when the Holy Scripture is their Rule; and to ſubmit to all thoſe means of Proficiency for which the Scriptures them-

themſelves were written, whether it be Doctrine. or Reproof, or Correction, or Inſtruction in Righteouſneſs; that the good Man may be perfect, throughly furniſhed unto all good Works. *Let the righteous ſmite me, it ſhall be a kindneſs; and let him reprove me, it ſhall be an excellent oil, which ſhall not break my head,* ſaith the holy *Pſalmiſt*, Pſalm 141. 5.

THE reſult of this whole Conſideration is, That if Men expect ever to make Improvements, ſo as to be wiſe unto Salvation, it is abſolutely neceſſary for them to mould their Hearts into an humble, ſoft, and ductile temper: To caſt out that ſcornful, diſdaining Spirit, that ſets up it ſelf againſt God; to lay aſide all that ſelf-conceit, which every where hinders the advancement of true Religion; and to entertain ſuch modeſt Opinions of their own Abilities and Endowments, as are ſuitable to the condition of poor, ſhort-ſighted, infirm Creatures, that without Light and Help from better Hands, and eſpecially from God's, could never arrive to a true ſtate of perfect Happineſs. In our travels towards it, nothing can be of greater uſe to us, than an humble, pliant, and manageable Diſpoſition.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

The Uſefulneſs of Humility, in reſpect of the many Evils it preſerves us from.

THE next thing to be conſider'd is, what an excellent Preſervative a Spirit of Humility is, from divers Evils and Inconveniencies, which are apt for want of it, to fall out and gall us in this our Chriſtian Progreſs. Theſe Evils and Inconveniencies are hardly to be numbred: But yet I conceive, an humble Spirit helps (at leaſt, in a very conſiderable meaſure) to preſerve us from them all, by theſe following means.

I. BY governing and moderating our inordinate Deſires.

II. BY guarding us from divers hurtful Sins, which pride of Heart leadeth People unto.

III. BY teaching us to make good uſe of the Diſpenſations of Providence.

I. FIRST,

1. FIRST, By governing and moderating our inordinate Deſires. There is hardly a worſe Plague, than a craving and greedy Appetite after the things that are in the World; which St. *John* diſtinguiſheth into three ſorts, 1 *John* 2. 16. *The luſt of the fleſh, the luſt of the eyes, and the pride of life*; that is, Pleaſure, Profit, and Honour. An inordinate deſire of theſe things, doth not only come from an evil Principle, but alſo is of very evil Conſequence; becauſe it cannot be anſwer'd. Such a Stomach is always craving; and the Wretch that condemns himſelf to the ſlaviſh office of feeding it, cannot with all his drudgeries ſatisfie it; for, inſtead of being filled, it ſtretcheth daily. From theſe boundleſs Deſires proceed a world of moral Evils, which torment Mankind, and diſorder the ſtate of humane Affairs, as Envy, Murmurings, Uncharitableneſs, Strife, and innumerable ſorts of Injuſtice and Oppreſſion: Of all which, none are more apt to be guilty than proud Men, *who enlarge their deſires as hell, and as death, that cannot be ſatisfi'd*, as the Prophet tells us, *Hab.* 2. 5. Indeed this doth neceſſarily follow; for thoſe inordinate Cravings being both bred and cheriſh'd by the vaſt Opinion Men

Men have of their own deſerts, they muſt needs think themſelves very hardly uſed by God himſelf; and, conſequently, grudge, and grow impatient, troubleſome, and vexatious, if their Merits be not rewarded according to that eſtimate which they themſelves take of them. Nor is ſuch a Reward poſſible to be given; becauſe whatever their Condition is, ſtill there is ſomething or other in it, which anſwers not expectations. Moderate Proſperity can bear no manner of proportion to the unmeaſurable Opinion and Appetite of a proud Perſon; and therefore it cannot poſſibly ſatisfie him, becauſe the Enjoyments he hath, fall ſo very ſhort of what he thinks he ſhould have. And if God be pleaſed to heap up the things of this World upon him in great abundance, neither doth this pleaſe the vain Wretch ſo as to ſatisfie him to the full, becauſe the opinion of his Merits ſtill ſwells, as his Fortunes grow. His ſingular Acquiſitions he takes as ſome Reward of his ſingular Deſervings; and as an argument and ſign of ſomething more behind which he ſhould, and is to have yet; till the Ambition reſembles *Alexander's the Great*, who could not be ſatisfi'd without getting the whole World, nor indeed *with* it: Tho' he had over-run

Men have of their own deſerts, they muſt needs think themſelves very hardly uſed by God himſelf; and, conſequently, grudge, and grow impatient, troubleſome, and vexatious, if their Merits be not rewarded according to that eſtimate which they themſelves take of them. Nor is ſuch a Reward poſſible to be given; becauſe whatever their Condition is, ſtill there is ſomething or other in it, which anſwers not expectations. Moderate Proſperity can bear no manner of proportion to the unmeaſurable Opinion and Appetite of a proud Perſon; and therefore it cannot poſſibly ſatisfie him, becauſe the Enjoyments he hath, fall ſo very ſhort of what he thinks he ſhould have. And if God be pleaſed to heap up the things of this World upon him in great abundance, neither doth this pleaſe the vain Wretch ſo as to ſatisfie him to the full, becauſe the opinion of his Merits ſtill ſwells, as his Fortunes grow. His ſingular Acquiſitions he takes as ſome Reward of his ſingular Deſervings; and as an argument and ſign of ſomething more behind which he ſhould, and is to have yet; till the Ambition reſembles *Alexander's the Great*, who could not be ſatisfi'd without getting the whole World, nor indeed *with* it: Tho' he had over-run

so great a part of it, yet he cry'd for madness that there were no more Worlds for him to Conquer. Now, every one may see what Mischiefs come from such wicked Tempers, and the World has every day too great reason to lament them. They plainly shew, That to be of an humble Mind, is not only a very necessary Duty, but an excellent Blessing too; that which keeps One from many hurtful Exorbitances, and makes him uncapable of annoying, of being a grievance to himself and others: Having a mean Opinion of his own Worth, he is therefore contented with his outward Fortunes, because he thinks them greater than he deserves: He is satisfi'd with what is needful, and that is but little in comparison, because Nature requires not much, unless Vanity creates an Appetite after many things, which might better be spar'd, because they are over-charging. And tho' a Man's particular Condition and state of Life does call for more than what is just proportionable to the necessities of Nature, yet the most chargeable stations are attended with much Excess; and many Expences should be retrench'd, which are merely thrown away upon Luxury and Clutter. Many great Inconveniencies and Evils might easily be avoided,

avoided, would Men but ſuffer their impertinent Ambition to ſhrink, and their Minds to be govern'd by a Spirit of Humility. And, after all, the Laws of it require us, whatever our outward Qualities and Circumſtances are, to repoſe our Cares in God's Boſom, where all humble Men think them ſo ſafely lodg'd, that there can be no room in their own Breaſts for thoſe tumultuous Deſires, which ſet the World in an uproar: Without acting againſt their own friendly Principle, they cannot but reſt in Chriſt's Promiſe, that *all theſe things ſhall be added unto them*, Matth. 6. 33. that is, all the neceſſary things of this Life; and to vex the World and our ſelves about more, is only to be mad to no purpoſe.

2. SECONDLY, Beſides the Advantage an humble Mind yields us by governing and regulating our Deſires, there is this additional Happineſs by it, That it guards us from many hurtful Sins which Pride of Heart leads People to. This is ſuch a fruitful, teeming Vice, that there are not many Sins but what are nearly related to it: Envy, Wrath, Contentiouſneſs, Singularity, Intractability, Vain-glory, Avarice, Cenſoriouſneſs, Affectation of Power, and divers other Vices, are either the immediate

Iſſue, or the Kindred of This, and all are ſet on work to ſupport it. Any one may ſee how fatally it operates in undermining and ruining the common Comforts of humane Life, together with the Peace and Intereſts of all Societies, whether they be Civil or Sacred. It is Pride of Heart that denies Obedience, that diſjoynts Families, that oppreſſes and tyrannizes over a Neighbourhood, that diſturbs Kingdoms, that divides Churches, that levies Wars, that forms and maintains heterodox Opinions, that violates Order, and (as a ready way to all manner of Miſchief) that ſtops Mens Ears againſt honeſt and faithful Counſels, becauſe they are in their own Thoughts wiſer and better than others, and count it a diminution to be directed. Did Humility take its due place under our Roofs, theſe various Evils would ſoon be remov'd; *Hagar* and her Iſſue would be quite caſt out of Doors, or at leaſt, ſecur'd from giving diſturbance. The firſt work of Humility is to mould our Hearts into an obſequious, pliable and pacifick Temper. *With the lowly is wiſdom*, ſays *Solomon*, Prov. 11. 2. He means that Wiſdom which is from above, which is pure, peaceable, gentle, eaſie to be intreated, full of Mercy and good Fruits, *without*

Par-

Partiality, *and without Hypocriſie*, as St. *James* deſcribes it, *James* 3. 17. The truth is, were nothing elſe to be conſider'd, but the preſent welfare of Societies, an humble Diſpoſition is of ſuch vaſt uſe for the procuring and preſerving of it, that if we might ſuppoſe a Community to conſiſt of the wiſeſt Men that ever were in the World, and that they were to find out and agree amongſt themſelves upon ſome one thing that ſhould be moſt advantageous for the Whole, they could not pitch upon any thing more Beneficial, more conducing to every One's Good, than the univerſal Practice of this admirable Vertue, which is the ſubject of this Diſcourſe: It diſpoſes Men of all Degrees and Ranks, whether Superiors, Inferiors, or Equals, to behave themſelves ſo in their reſpective Stations, that Mankind could not chuſe but be very happy even in this Life, were this ſingle Vertue ſincerely practis'd by all, as it ſhould be: It diſpoſes all Governors *to condeſcend to thoſe of low eſtate*, Rom. 12. 16. *To ſhew themſelves in all things patterns of good works*, Tit. 2. 7. To be Miniſters and Servants to the reſt, *even as the Son of Man came not to be miniſtred unto, but to miniſter*, Matth. 20. 27, 28. It diſpoſes ſuch as are to be govern'd, whe-

ther in Church or State, to be *ſubject to the higher Powers*, Rom. 13. 1. To be *ſubject to Principalities; to obey Magiſtrates*, Tit. 3. 1. *To ſubmit themſelves to every Ordinance of Man for the Lord's ſake, whether it be to the King as Supreme, or unto Deputies that are ſent by him, for the puniſhment of evil-doers, and for the praiſe of them that do well*, 1 Pet. 2. 13, 14. It diſpoſes People that ſtand upon the ſame Level, and are of the ſame Degree, to be *kindly affectioned one to another in brotherly love, in honour preferring one another*, Rom. 12. 10. *Not to do any thing through ſtrife or vain glory, but in lowlineſs of mind, each to eſteem other better than themſelves*, Phil. 2. 3. *To be at peace among themſelves, to warn them that are unruly, to comfort the feeble-minded, to ſupport the weak, to be patient towards all men*, 1 Theſſ. 5. 13, 14. In ſhort, the Office of Humility is to caſt out of us the very Offal of humane Nature, to cure us of all imperious, ſurly and perverſe Humours, to ſooth and ſoften our Tempers, to animate us with a condeſcending, complaiſant and gentle Spirit; to make us tractable and eaſie, candid and ſweet, benign and truly gracious, as it becomes thoſe whoſe mutual Neceſſities require them to ſtoop to each other, to relieve each other, to bear

bear with each others infirmities. And what a happy World would it be, were we all thus minded! Thoſe Vices which annoy and infeſt Mankind, would hardly be ſo much as heard of; to be ſure the miſchievous Effects of them would not be felt ſo as to diſorder all Affairs, and to throw People into ſuch fits of Rage and Diſtraction, as if the World were nothing but a great Hoſpital of Lunaticks.

3. A Spirit of true Humility would be a Sovereign Cure of thoſe many Evils which the fooliſh Pride of Men naturally brings upon us. And if it ſhall pleaſe God, for particular Reaſons, to ſuffer at any time ſome untoward Accidents to happen, which are not immediately and directly of our own chuſing, an Humble Mind will help us to make ſuch a wholeſome uſe of them, as to turn that into good Diſcipline, which to faſtidious and intractable Tempers is a very painful ſore; which is the laſt Argument of the great uſefulneſs of this Vertue. Among theſe *Accidents*, we may reckon Domeſtick Misfortunes, diſappointments of Expectations, Miſcarriages in Friendſhip, loſs of Liberty, decay or want of Fortunes, and the like, contingent Preſſures, which to

Men of unſubdu'd Minds are things very heavy and *grievous to be born.* But *Plutarch* has rightly obſerv'd, That as *Bees gather Hony out of the drieſt and prickliеſt Herb,* ſo Good Men may draw ſomething that is proper and beneficial for them out of the ſharpeſt Misfortunes: There are no tryals, but what will yield a kindly extract, where Art and Induſtry undertakes Improvements: And if Men would apply their minds to this Divine ſort of Chymiſtry, they might at once ſublimate their Natures, and their Delights too, tho' it be by *Fire* ('tis a Proverbial expreſſion, which St. *Paul* uſes, denoting ſome Difficulty, 1 Cor. 3. 15.) It may be hard perhaps at the firſt, but *Time* and *Aſſuefaction* will help all Men to draw good out of any Evil: Nor are any ſo well prepar'd for it, as Men of humble minds; becauſe divers things will ſink into their thoughts, which the Hearts of others are too big and too hard for: As, That no Man ought to be maſter of the World, or of his own Fortunes; but that we ſhould rather make our minds pliant and ſuitable to our Condition, whatever that is. If it be Retirement we are confin'd to, the beſt way is to turn it into an opportunity for Speculation; as, *Socrates* Philoſophiz'd in Priſon, and *Plato* betook him-

himſelf to cloſe Studies, when he had fallen under the hatred of *Dionyſius*: And thus Knowledge and Wiſdom might be the Extract of ſuch misfortunes. Again, the World, for great Reaſons is ſubjected to variety of Chances, as Conſort does conſiſt of great diverſity of Notes, which yet ſerve altogether to make Harmony, tho' ſome by themſelves are flat and unpleaſant: And why (ſaith the Humble Man) ſhould the courſe of things be alter'd for our ſakes, when our Betters before us have had their turns too, and when conſtant Experience ſhews us, that every thing is fickle and liable to changes, and that the World is no other than a Scene, that for a time pleaſes, but ſoon deceives the Eye; and the conſequent of this Meditation is, That we ſhould ſet our Affections on things above.

AGAIN, notwithſtanding this diverſity and uncertainty of Affairs, if People would but make juſt Compariſons, they might eaſily find, that the meaſure of their Wants bears no proportion to the greatneſs of their Enjoyments. But this is a great fault, That they over-look many Bleſſings which are under their Eye, and turn their Thoughts looſe and fugitive after ſome little thing that is loſt;

Like

Like Children (ſays *Plutarch*) *who, when a ſingle Toy is taken from them, cry and roar for that, neglecting all other things, which may be of greater value.* 'Tis pity that Men ſhould out-live the Innocence of Childhood, and retain its Follies: If they were govern'd by a Spirit of true Humility, they would make ſuch a Religious uſe of thoſe Wants which they count great Miſchances, as to be thankful to God, that they are not greater nor more.

FURTHER yet; ſuppoſe One's Misfortunes to be great indeed, an humble Mind will direct him to conſider whether other Mens do not equal, and perhaps exceed them: Few indeed take ſuch an eſtimate of them, becauſe they do not create ſuch an acute and home-pain, as the little Thorn which is in One's own Fleſh. But we ſee Afflictions are every where; and ſince they are common to all Mankind, Humility teaches us to take it for our Comfort, that we are not ſingular; and, inſtead of Murmuring, to expreſs our Gratitude by Works of Charity and Compaſſion to our Neighbours: This is to make a good uſe of God's Diſpenſations; and to all this we are directed by an humble Mind.

AND

AND yet, laſtly, there is one thing more, which I ſhould not forget or omit; and it is, That we ſhould ſet our Affections on things above, not on theſe earthly matters. I have often thought on the Philoſopher's Notion, *That the readieſt way to be rich is, not to enlarge One's Eſtate, but to limit and pinion the Deſires:* And this is the ready way to be happy alſo, to keep our Minds from roving, and to confine them to the things which are at home before us. When Misfortunes diſquiet us, the great fault is within our ſelves, becauſe we want much of the Stoick, as well as of the Chriſtian, and place Felicity, not in the Practice of Vertue, but in outward foreign Acquiſitions. And this is the reaſon that we are ſo troubled about them, and dejected when we miſs them; whereas we ſhould rather apply our Minds to that one thing neceſſary, which is always ready at hand, and never to be taken away without our own conſent.

HUMILITY prompts us to improve our Spiritual State by the Diſpenſations of God in every mortifying Condition; to grow Wiſer or Better by them, to become the more Meek, the more

more Patient, the more Devout, the more mindful of our whole Duty to God and Man.

And if we be careful to anſwer the Ends of the Divine Providence to us after this humble manner, tho' the things which the World thirſteth after fall to a low ebb, we ſhall have Waters enough within our own Ciſterns to refreſh our Souls, till we get to thoſe Rivers of Pleaſure, which are at God's Right-hand for evermore.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

The Suitableneſs of Humility to the Mind of Chriſt.

HAVING conſider'd the great Uſefulneſs of this Vertue in ſeveral Reſpects, as a very powerful Argument to inforce the Practice of it, I ſhould now put an end to that part of this Diſcourſe, but that there remaineth behind yet one Conſideration more, which ought to be the moſt affecting and moving, becauſe it is to be drawn from the great Exemplar of all Holineſs, the Lord Jeſus; whoſe own Humility is a Pattern which he ſeems to have ſingled out from the reſt of his Vertues, for the more peculiar imitation of his Diſciples. Leſt the Grandees of the World, the Mighty and the Noble, ſhould account this Vertue an unmanly Habit, and look upon it with a diſdaining Eye, as a thing infinitely beneath them, the Son of God was pleas'd to Dignifie it with a ſingular Honour, and to make it Glorious by inrobing himſelf with it, and by expreſſing his own great Eſteem of it to the very laſt.

THESE

THESE three things ſhew the ſtupendous Nature of his Humility: 1. His wonderful Incarnation. 2. His outward Condition of Life. 3. His dying upon the Croſs.

1. FIRST, His wonderful Incarnation. In the Second *Chapter* of St. *Paul's* Epiſtle to the *Philippians*, where the Apoſtle does with ſuch Earneſtneſs and Zeal conjure us to be humble-minded, he makes uſe of Chriſt's own Example, as the moſt operative and irreſiſtible Argument; becauſe antecedent to his Conception in the Holy Virgin's Womb, he was a Divine Perſon, actually having the Divine Eſſence, really ſubſiſting in the Divine Nature, full of the Divine Majeſty, and of all the Glories which are Eſſential to the Deity. *In him dwelt all the fulneſs of the God-head Bodily*, (that is, truly, really, and ſubſtantially) as St. *Paul* ſpeaks, *Col.* 2. 9. This is the meaning of thoſe words, *Phil.* 2. 6. Chriſt *being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God*, (meaning, by Identity of Nature.) Notwithſtanding which moſt glorious State, he emptied himſelf, taking the form of a Servant, being made in the likeneſs of Men; for that is the literal exact rendring

dring of the words, *Verſe* 7. This was moſt aſtoniſhing Humility! Deity and Manhood are things ſo vaſtly diſtant, and the Diſtance between the Perfections of the one, and the Infirmities of the other is ſo infinite, that the Son of God's Condeſcention in taking humane Nature upon him, is impoſſible to be expreſs'd, or comprehended. God's being manifeſted in the Fleſh, is one of thoſe Myſteries which Angels themſelves deſire to look into; ſtooping and bowing down, to pry into it, as the *Greek* word ſignifies, 1 *Pet.* 1. 12. Where the Apoſtle alludes to the golden Cherubims upon the Ark, which hover'd *with their wings over the Mercy-ſeat, with their faces one toward another*, Exod. 37. 9. When the Power of the Higheſt over-ſhadow'd the Virgin, ſo that God became Incarnate, a humane Body was prepar'd him, that he might be in a fit ſtate to tranſact the Mediator's Office, which he had undertaken between his Father and Mankind. This was indeed a neceſſary part of the Divine Oeconomy, to bring about the great Ends of the *New Covenant*. But yet the Son of God's ſubmitting to the vile condition of Humanity, is his ſubjecting himſelf thereby to the natural Weakneſſes, Wants and Paſſions of humane Fleſh, was a far greater

greater act of Humility than when he humbled himſelf to Death; which yet the Apoſtle reflected on with ſuch Admiration, *Phil.* 2. For a Man to die, is the conſequent of Nature; and whatever the death is, it is no ſuch wonder, as for God to be made Fleſh. This was ſuch a reconciling of Extremes, as could not be brought about, but by ſtepping down to the very loweſt degree of Exinanition and Abaſement.

2. AGREEABLE hereunto was the ſubſequent Condition of his Life, from the Womb to the Grave: All along ſo humble in every Reſpect, that the World might eaſily ſee his Intentions were, to baniſh all Pride out of the World, and to ſhew what a deſpicable thing humane Glory is in the account of God, whoſe own Glory conſiſts in the adorable Perfections of his Nature. To be entitled to ſuch mean Parentage, to take up with ſuch poor Fortunes, to be born in the Stable of an Inn, to be wrapp'd in the courſeſt Faſhion, to be laid in a Manger; to appear in ſuch an abject, deſpicable Condition, and to make it One's choice too, few (if any) of *Adam*'s Race would ſtoop to this, were their Lots at their own diſpoſal; and yet this was the Condition which

which the moſt bleſſed Son of God deſignedly took upon himſelf. Eight Days after his Nativity he ſubmitted to Circumciſion, which was an argument of Mens Hereditary Pollutions, as well as the Seal of God's Covenant with the *Jews*: And by humbling himſelf to the bloody ſtroke of the Knife, he ſhew'd, that tho' he was perfectly Innocent, yet he took on him the guilt of our Sins, as well as the ſhame (I had almoſt ſaid the ſcandal) of the extreameſt Poverty. St. *Luke* tells us, that he was ſubject to his Parents, *Luke* 2. 5. And the Tradition is very Ancient, that as he grew up, he wrought together with his reputed Father in his Manual Occupation, tho' he could have fed his Mother and him by Miracles; but he did no Miracle till he was thirty Years old, and then thoſe Works were for the Confirmation of his Doctrines, and to prove his Divine Authority: And after *Joſeph*'s death (which, it's thought, was a conſiderable time before he began to Preach) 'tis believ'd that he us'd the Trade alone for his own and his Mother's ſupport; making Yokes and Ploughs, (ſays *Juſtin Martyr*) for which reaſon he was afterwards call'd, not only *the Carpenter's Son*, but *the Carpenter*, Mark 6. 3. As he was firſt re-

veal'd to Shepherds, ſo his Retinue afterwards conſiſted of Fiſhermen, and ſuch like humble People, whoſe Meanneſs the better fitted them to be Examples of what he ſaid in his Sermon on the Mount, *Bleſſed are the poor in Spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of God*, Matth. 5. 3. Indeed the Labours of his Hands ceas'd as ſoon as he enter'd on his Miniſterial Office: Then he liv'd by the Hands of others; which manner of living, tho' it was grounded upon an eternal Principle of Juſtice, becauſe *the work-man is worthy of his meat*, as he ſaid himſelf, *Matth.* 10. 10. yet in him it was an expreſſion of great Humility, becauſe he took all Miniſtrations to him as things precarious, even from the hands of thoſe who confeſs'd him to be the Son of God, the Lord of all: And at the ſame time when his Neceſſities requir'd him to make uſe of Money, that he might for ever diſgrace all inordinate love of it, he thought that vile Perſon the propereſt to carry the Bag, who was a Thief and a Traitor. His whole Life was a conſtant ſtate of Poverty, having not (of his own) where to lay his Head, after it was lifted up out of the Manger; nor was that poor reſting place his own neither. His patient bearing Aſperſions and Reproach (the uſual con-

conſequents of a needy Condition) was a further argument ſtill of the great Humility of his Heart. High Stomachs are apt to be ſtimulated to that degree by one ſharp treatment, that ſometimes nothing can allay, but a glut of Revenge; life it ſelf falls a ſacrifice for it; and a little detraction is too often made the Price of Blood. When the Lord Jeſus was revil'd, he did not at all revile again, 1 *Pet.* 2. 23. but endur'd beforehand Crucifixion in his Name: A Glutton and a Wine-bibber, a Friend of Publicans and Sinners, a Samaritan, a Dæmoniack, an Inſtrument of *Beelzebub*, a Perverter of the Nation: Theſe and the like Calumnies were Prefatory to that ſpightful Libel on the Croſs, *This is the King of the Jews*; and yet he bore all theſe Reproaches with the ſame Humility and Evenneſs of Mind, wherewith he bore the ſolemn pompous Mockery of the Reed and Purple Robe; formalities intended, not to inaugurate, but to mortifie him. 'Tis true, theſe (tho' very great) Indignities, did neither wound his Fleſh, nor hurt his Skin; and ſo in that reſpect were more tolerable than the Buffettings, the Scourgings, the Coronary Thorns, which were a part of the Epilogue. This was ſuch a ſtrange Form

for the Son of God to take upon him, that *Pilate* himſelf, tho' he knew nothing of his Divinity, ſhew'd him to the People as an amazing Spectacle, *Behold the Man*, ſaid he, *John* 19. 5. His ſubmitting to ſuch ſhameful Scourgings and Dilacerations exceeded his ſtooping down to the Baſon of Water, to waſh his Diſciples Feet, before he was apprehended: And yet that was an act of Humility, which our Saviour himſelf intended, as an Eminent Example for the very greateſt in his Church to follow; that they ſhould do as he did unto them; becauſe *the ſervant is not greater than his Lord*; *neither he that is ſent, greater than he that ſent him*, John 13. 15, 16.

AND yet Thirdly, There is one thing behind ſtill, which was more than this; and that was his preparing a Lavatory for the whole World, by pouring out not Water only, but Blood too, and that upon the Croſs. St. *Paul* mentions this as the moſt ſignal and ſtupendous Act of Humility, that he ſubmitted even to Crucifixion; which was not only the moſt Cruel, but the moſt Opprobrious kind of Puniſhment.

AMONG

AMONG the *Jews* a particular Malediction went along with Suſpenſion, tho' the Criminal did not expire and die by it, but was expos'd upon a Gibbet, after he had ſuffer'd death ſome other way. For the Law of God gave them no Authority to take any Man's Life by this ſort of Puniſhment. It only impower'd them, after they had ſtoned or ſtrangled a Malefactor, to hang his breathleſs Body up for ſhame and example ſake; and that Ignominy was inflicted only upon Blaſphemers, Idolaters, and the like. It was a ſign that ſuch Criminals were under a particular Curſe; *for he that is hanged, is accurſed of God*, ſaith the Scripture, *Deut.* 21. 23. This his Suſpenſion was not the cauſe, but the ſign of his being accurſed, a token of the Malediction, an argument that he was deteſted by the God of Purity; that he was look'd upon as one not fit to tread upon the Earth, and therefore was hang'd up in the Air, leſt he ſhould defile the Land; and thence was to be thrown under Ground, in all haſte, the very ſame day, as an abominable Creature, that deſerv'd preſently to be remov'd out of the Peoples view. *If a man have committed a ſin worthy of death, and he be put to death, and thou hang him*

on a tree, his body ſhall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou ſhalt in any wiſe bury him that day; ſo the Law runs, *Deut.* 21. 22, 23. And ſome learned *Jews* tell us, That even the Tree on which ſuch a Malefactor was expos'd, was to be bury'd with him; and ſo the Stone wherewith he had been ſtoned, or the Sword wherewith he had been cut off, or the Napkin wherewith he had been ſtrangled, all was to be put into the Earth with him; and all this to ſhew, what a vile and abominable thing he was in the account of God. Now by this the wonderful Humility of the Lord Jeſus appears, that he was pleas'd to ſubmit to that reproach and ſhame which was due to thoſe, and to thoſe only, who were particularly curſed. Had the Ignominy been all his Suffering; had he not undergone the Pains, the Torments, the Death of the curſed Tree, his condeſcending to take up the Opprobrious part was without Parallel, and beyond all poſſibility of Example, conſidering the Innocence of his whole Life, the Dignity and Greatneſs of his Perſon, and his own voluntary ſuſception of the moſt Infamous Puniſhment.

AND yet this is an additional Circumſtance, That it was the Ignominy of the *Croſs*; which was a Roman Inſtrument of Death and Shame, diſtinct and different from thoſe that were ordinarily in uſe among God's People; nay, an Inſtrument which had a peculiar Ignominy belonging to it. The Law of God equally reach'd all Men that were obnoxious to the Penalty: The *Sanhedrim* had a Power of bringing them all indifferently under the Malediction of the Gibbet: But among the *Romans* Crucifixion was a *ſervile Puniſhment* (as 'twas often call'd) a reproachful Death appointed for the moſt fœculent part of Mankind, chiefly for Slaves, and more eſpecially for ſuch of them as ran away from the ſervice of their Lords, or plotted their Lord's ruine, or privily carried Information againſt them to the Magiſtrate. Fugitives, Traitors, Sycophants, and ſuch infamous, abject Villains, were wont to be executed upon Croſſes, as Dogs too ſometimes were. Very rarely did any Free-man of *Rome* ſuffer after that manner, unleſs he was found to be a Robber, an aſſaſſine, or a Forger of Deeds. In ſhort, it was ſuch a baſe, diſgraceful Puniſhment, that the firſt Chriſtian Emperor *Conſtantine the Great*,

took away the further uſe of it, becauſe the Saviour of the World had ſuffer'd the ſhame of it in his Perſon. Lord! what a low ſtep of Condeſcenſion was This? That He, who was in the form of God, cloath'd with Majeſty and Honour from everlaſting: That He, who thought it no Robbery to be equal with God (it was a Dignity which he had a Natural Right unto) that He ſhould not only conceal this his Greatneſs, and appear in the ſhape and faſhion of a Man, but ſhould moreover take on him the form of a Servant, the moſt contemptible Man, and at laſt ſubmit to the Puniſhment of the vileſt and moſt profligate Slave! No Wonder can exceed or come near this; unleſs it be, that ſinful wretched Man ſhould be proud, when God himſelf was pleas'd to be thus humble.

ONE would think, that if haughty People would but reflect with one Eye upon their own ſtate, and with the other behold the moſt Holy *Jeſus*, they could not but be abaſh'd to find ſo abſurd a diſſimilitude; themſelves glittering like ſo many Morning-Stars, with a borrow'd Light; and the Sun of Righteouſneſs wading in an Eclipſe all along from his firſt Riſing to his Bed. 'Twere ſtrange,

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if ſhame did not cover their Faces at laſt; if a Compariſon ſo very unequal were not enough to baffle a fooliſh Vice; if this alone were not of ſufficient force, not only to ſupplant its Credit and Intereſt in the World, but to put it out of countenance alſo. As there never was any Sorrow, ſo never was there any Humility like his, for Quality and for Degree too: Nor indeed is any ſuch proportion expected of us; tho' according to humane Reaſoning, our Meaſure, as to this, ought (if poſſible) to exceed. The Son of God could not but know his own Dignity and Excellencies: He could not but be conſcious of the infinite Glories of his Divine Nature, and of the Perfections of his Humanity too, by means of its Hypoſtatical Union with the Deity. Upon this account, had he ſet himſelf out, according to his true, intrinſick Worth, all the Splendor in the World had been infinitely ſhort of his juſt Due. But his Buſineſs here was not to appear as the Son of God, but to act as a Mediator, as our Subſtitute and Proxy. Accordingly, as he put on our courſe Clothing, ſo from the Manger to the Croſs he wrap'd himſelf up in ſuch a mean Diſguiſe, as was ſuitable to the great Deſign upon which he came out of his Father's Boſom. When he

he ſaid to his Diſciples, *I am lowly in heart*, he ſpake as the Son of Man, that was not to make a pompous ſhew of the Glory he had from everlaſting, but was to live in an obſcure Condition, to end his Life with Contumely and Diſgrace, and throughout the whole courſe of his Exinanition, was to act and ſuffer below his Great Self, beneath his Dignity. In all this he was a charming Pattern to his Followers, that we ſhould learn of him to ſtep low, and to walk in that lowly manner, which, tho' it was beneath him, is very fit for us; anſwerable to things of our low ſize, very ſuitable to Creatures, whoſe firſt Principles are Duſt and Clay, and whoſe fall would have ſunk us lower by far than into our original Earth, had not the Son of God humbled himſelf ſo, as to come down from Heaven, and to deſcend into Hell too for us. In him, Humility was a Degradation; in us, it is a ſtanding upon our own proper and due Level: Which makes the Example carry the greater force, becauſe it propoſes to us, not any ſort of Condeſcenſion, ſtrictly and rightly ſo call'd (much leſs ſuch Condeſcention as was in the Lord of Life and Glory) but ſuch lowlineſs of Heart as is proportionable to our true Quality and Deſerts; and, conſequently,

ſequently, agreeable to the Laws of Juſtice.

I told you before, That Humility conſiſts in a fair and equal Opinion of One's own ſelf, according to his exact Rate and intrinſick Value: And ſuch an Opinion muſt needs be very mean and low, becauſe if we take a true eſtimate of what we really have, and of what we really are, we cannot find in our ſelves any thing conſiderable, ſetting our Demerits and Guilt aſide; to be ſure, nothing conſiderable enough to outweigh, or balance that Guilt. So that every touch of Pride is ſo far the exalting of One's ſelf above meaſure, which is therefore the more Criminal, becauſe it is a direct Affront to the Saviour of the World, whoſe unfathomable Humility was intended for an everlaſting Law, to exact of Mankind the profoundeſt Submiſſions, ſince he, the Son of God, was pleas'd to ſet ſo great a Price upon the Duty, by becoming a Precedent to us in his own moſt Sacred Perſon.

AND now, what ſhall we ſay more to encourage or oblige us to the Practice of it? A Vertue ſo graceful in its own Nature, ſo deſirable for it ſelf; a Vertue that

that is juſtifi'd upon ſo many Principles of common Reaſon; a Vertue ſo adapted to our great Neceſſities; a Vertue ſo inſtrumental towards our greateſt Good; a Vertue ſo productive of all interiour Peace and Complacency, ſo neceſſary and uſeful for our growth in Grace, ſuch a ſecurity and defence againſt the Malignity of outward Accidents: Laſtly, a Vertue ſo Divine and Honourable for its near Relation to the only begotten of God, the Author and Finiſher of our Faith: This ſo excellent a Perfection carries with it ſuch preſent Rewards, as are not to be exceeded but by the actual Poſſeſſion of that moſt bleſſed State which is as yet in futurity: The truth is, Humility of Mind is a very proper Preparative for it. The Lord Jeſus, who came down from Heaven, knew beſt what Vertues and Diſpoſitions of Soul are neceſſary for us, in order to our happy being there. He has not given us ſo many Precepts in vain, nor are his Commands only to try and exerciſe our Obedience. Nay, the Duties he exacts of us are not purely Conditions neither, things fix'd by the mere Pleaſure of God, without which we *ſhall* not be happy. We *cannot* be truly happy without them; without them our Nature is not capable of

of the Felicities which are above. They are therefore both neceſſary Conditions, and ſuitable Qualifications too; proper, genuine and kindly Preparations to fit and diſpoſe us for a Heavenly ſtate: And of theſe noble Qualifications, an humble Temper is one; it has a direct and natural Tendency to fit us for that Place, where there has been no room ſince *Lucifer*'s Apoſtacy (nor ever will be again) for *Lucifer*'s Vice, the damn'd Original of Strife, Paſſion, and Diſobedience.

A lowly Heart is fix'd and ready for the Works in Heaven, to admire and adore the Father of Spirits, and to fall down proſtrate before him; to glorifie him in the bleſſed Choir of Angels; to bleſs him for our being written in the Lamb's Book of Life; to praiſe him for being counted worthy of the leaſt degree of Glory; to rejoyce that others have their ſhare of it alſo; to triumph for being found at the Feet of God's Saints, as *Ignatius* the Martyr wiſh'd he might be found in Chriſt's Kingdom at the Feet of St. *Paul*; to joyn with all the Spirits of juſt Men made Perfect, in a Life of everlaſting Harmony; to live on to everlaſting Ages in the raviſhing Enter-

tertainments of a serene and delightful World, in a fix'd and unchangeable state of Rest and Peace, of Order and Obedience, of Joy and Love, continually accompany'd with *Hallelujah's* and *Hosannah's*, and the profoundest Adorations: These will be our Works in Heaven when it shall please God to bring us thither, and we endeavour our selves to go. And all these Works Humility of Mind does naturally serve to fit and dispose us for: Which shews, that we cannot take a more Religious and Prudent course now, than to work our stiff and stubborn Hearts into an humble Temper, and to apply them to the constant exercise of those things which help at once both to express and to increase it. For as all Habits are acquir'd by the daily repetition of single acts, so are they confirm'd and increas'd by it.

THIS, as well as other Vertues, grows by degrees, by our using our selves to the familiar Practice of it. The more we exercise acts of Humility, and the more frequent those acts are, the more humble do our Minds become: He that is lowly, will thereby be the more lowly still; due Expressions are both the Signs of an humble Disposition, and the In-

Inſtrumental Cauſes of its Increment. For which reaſon I ſhall not enlarge this Diſcourſe, by directing you, under a diſtinct particular Head, to the proper means of Humility (tho' it would be a very Practical Method) but for the greater brevity, ſhall chuſe rather to proceed to that which I propos'd as the Third and laſt General, *viz.* To ſhew after what manner we are to expreſs this great Chriſtian Vertue; which, I preſume, will ſerve inſtead of all, as arguments and tokens of Humility, and as means of it likewiſe.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

How Humility is to be expreſt, as by ſerving the Honour of God.

1. NOw the firſt and nobleſt Expreſſion of a lowly Heart is, to apply it ſelf to thoſe things which are for the Honour of God. If it be the part of all humble Men, in honour, to preferr one another, *Rom.* 12. 10. certainly nothing can be ſo neceſſary and proper for them, as to ſeek God's Honour, to do the things that are for God's Honour, and to preferr God's Honour before and above all. This is a moſt genuine act of Humility, becauſe we are infinitely below him; derive all from him, and depend every minute upon him; as the Supreme Author of our being, the ſole Arbiter and Diſpoſer of our Fortunes. Upon this account, to do the things which are for his Honour is very natural to an humble Soul, poſſeſt with a ſence of his Glory and Excellencies, of his Dominion and Authority over all, and of the inexhauſtible Riches of his Goodneſs and Love to Mankind. And

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as this is an argument of Humility, ſo it is a good means to amplifie and improve it. For the more we are concern'd for God's Honour, and the more we intend it, the more we muſt needs think on him, and the more ſenſible ſtill we muſt needs be of the reaſons of this our Duty towards him.

HE is hereby the more before our Eyes; his Perfections hereby appear every day to us the more Glorious; the vaſt diſtance between his infinite Majeſty, and us poor contemptible Creatures, begets in us ſtill the greater Reverence; his Power ſtrikes us with the more piercing awe; the Conſideration of his All-ſufficiency aboundeth the more; and the ſence we have of his Mercy, Kindneſs and Truth increaſeth daily. In ſhort, the more we entertain our Souls with Contemplations of God's Greatneſs, the more we find our ſelves obliged to honour him; and the more we ſtudy to do that, the lower are our Souls apt to ſink under the due apprehenſion of our own meanneſs. Now, for the better exerciſing our ſelves as to this matter, we muſt note, That there are divers ways of ſerving God's Honour; at preſent I ſhall mention only theſe Five.

I. By aſcribing unto God all the Good we have.

II. By making him ſuch humble Returns, as may in ſome meaſure teſtifie our Obligations to him.

III. By devoting our ſelves to his Worſhip.

IV. By giving our ſelves up to his Diſpoſal.

V. By depending upon him, and truſting to him, in reference to all Events: And by every one of theſe ways of ſerving God's Honour, muſt we expreſs our Humility.

1. By aſcribing unto God all the Good we have. There is no ſuch Child of a Man, as he who becomes his own flatterer; who is ſo full of himſelf, as if he were the Maker and Maſter of his own Fortunes. And yet the Folly would be the more pardonable, were it attended with the Innocence of a Child. But in this there is a mixture of Sacrilege with Vanity, becauſe ſuch Paraſites rob God of his Glory, to beſtow it at home. This

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is the ridiculous Sin of aſſuming Spirits, That they engroſs the Honour that ſhould be return'd to the Divine Being; *they ſacrifice to their own nets, and burn incenſe to their own drags*, as the expreſſion is, *Hab.* 1. 16. That is, give themſelves the praiſe of all, either as the ſole, rightful Proprietors, or, at leaſt, as Partners and Sharers with God. *Is not this great Babylon that I have built, for the houſe of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majeſty?* ſaid that haughty Prince, *Dan.* 4. 30. Anſwerable to which is the echo you may hear from every proud Heart: Are not theſe the Perfections that I have wrought? Are not theſe the Excellencies that I have deſerved? Are not theſe the Rewards that I have purchaſed? Nay, is not that the Heaven too, which I have merited and bought? When this Vice groweth ſo rank in the Mind, ſo high and ſtrong, it is a plain argument, that the Soil is very bad, and that good Husbandry hath been wanting, ſince the evil One ſowed the Tare. An humble Heart is neceſſarily productive of all ſelf-denial: 'Tis the moſt indiſpoſed, moſt unapt thing in the World to exalt it ſelf, and eſpecially to magnifie it ſelf againſt the Lord, as the Prophet ſpeaks, *Jer.* 48. 26. Becauſe

it is *in him that we live, and move, and have our beings*, Acts 17. 28. Becauſe the whole diſpoſing of the Lot is of the Lord, however it be caſt into the Lap, *Prov.* 16. 33. Becauſe *every good gift, and every perfect, is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights*, James 1. 17. Becauſe we all live (the very beſt and greateſt of us) upon God's Providence, and ſtand indebted to his Goodneſs for all that we enjoy, and for all that we hope for; it is a moſt natural act of an humble Soul, to aſcribe all we have, and all we expect to have, to him whoſe Mercy is over all his Works. *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy Name give the praiſe, for thy mercy, and for thy truth ſake*, ſaid the *Pſalmiſt*, 115. 1. *By the Grace of God I am what I am*, ſaith St. *Paul*. And again, *Not I, but the Grace of God which was with me*, 1 Cor. 15. 10. And again, *By Grace are ye ſaved, through Faith, and yet not of your ſelves; it is the gift of God: Not of works, leſt any man ſhould boaſt*, Epheſ. 2. 8, 9. Theſe are very humbling Reflections, that we are Debtors to God's Goodneſs, for all our Enjoyments; for thoſe Advantages which are moſt valuable and excellent. And this affords us a ſure Rule to go by; on every occaſion to give God the Praiſe and Glory of all.

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What-ever thoſe things be, which are ready to puff vain People up; whether they be natural Endowments of the Body or the Mind: Whether they be accidental Acquiſitions, ſuch as a plentiful Fortune, worldly Greatneſs, popular Eſteem, and the like: Or, whether they be moral Accompliſhments and Perfections, whereby we become wiſer and better than other Men: Still to look up to God as our Creditor and Benefactor, and with religious Baſhfulneſs and Modeſty to ſlide away from all danger of ſelf-aſſuming, to beat off every Temptation, and every riſing of the Heart towards it. Indeed it would be well for us, to cover and conceal theſe things from our own view: But if we find that too hard a Task (as ſometimes it is) to blind and cozen our Eyes by ſuch an honeſt Artifice, we ſhould remember, That the Office of every humble Man is to look, not ſo much on his own things, as on the things of others, *Phil.* 2. 4. that is, others that excel us. To compare our ſelves, not with our ſelves, or with thoſe behind us, but with ſuch as out-do and out-ſtrip us; and when we turn our Eyes homeward, to look upon the black Feet, as well as upon the gawdy Plumes; this would be a proper way to make us ſink into a juſt propor-

tion, and to deſtroy all that Loftineſs, which at every turn is apt to ſhoot out of the Mind on a ſudden, like *Jonah*'s Gourd; which was ſtiff and ſhady for the time, but the leſs valuable, becauſe ſubject to be ſmitten with a little Worm. Any juſt Reflection is enough to ſpoil and ruine that high Conceit, which vain Perſons entertain of their Accompliſhments and Perfections; becauſe many times they are but imaginary; and when they are real, the Honour muſt be given where it is due; namely, to that Supreme Being, who *giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *James* 1. 5. 'Tis no reproach to receive at God's Hands: The only thing wherewith Men are upbraided is, That they arrogate to themſelves the Bleſſings they receive, as if their own Hands had created them. Therefore to expreſs your Humility, and at the ſame time to increaſe it, keep your Minds full of God; make him the Theme for your Meditations, that he may be the Object of your Fear and Love: Let the ſenſe of his Goodneſs abide, and dwell with you continually. Conſider what you are, by whoſe Grace and Bounty you are ſo; and what you have, which you did not receive; and in all your actions be ſure to manifeſt the great

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ſenſe you have of his Divine Providence, of whoſe Mercy alone it is, that you are not worſe than nothing. This is to honour God after an humble manner, and to expreſs your Humility indeed; to exalt him in your Hearts, and him only; to caſt down all Imaginations, and every high Thought before him; to make his Name and his Praiſe Glorious in that Temple of his, which the Devil would have you deſecrate, by ſetting up an Idol in God's room.

2. SECONDLY, Another way of ſerving God's Honour, and conſequently, of expreſſing the lowlineſs of your Hearts is, to make him ſuch humble Returns, as may in ſome meaſure teſtifie your Obligations to him Where there is a true and thorough ſenſe of that, the next natural Thought will be that Divine Enquiry of *David*'s, *What ſhall I render unto the Lord, for all his benefits towards me?* Pſalm 116. 12. Conſidering that we derive all from him, and owe all to him, it is highly reaſonable for us to make ſuch Retributions, as are arguments and ſignifications of his Dominion and Goodneſs over all, and of our daily Dependance upon him. This was the Ground and Original of thoſe Sacred

Rites and Solemnities, which thinking Men in all Ages of the World found themſelves obliged to uſe, by the Laws of Natural, as well as Revealed Religion. The rearing of Altars, the offering of Sacrifices, the building of Temples, the paying of Vows, the hallowing of Times, the ſetting apart of Lands, the preſenting of Firſt Fruits, the ſanctifying of Perſons, the uſe of Muſical Inſtruments, and all theſe great and coſtly Solemnities which were thought moſt ſuitable to the Divine Majeſty, and moſt proper to ſet forth the Honour of it; they were all inſtituted out of a juſt Senſe, and in humble Acknowledgment of God's Abſolute Right and Sovereignty over all. They were the beſt outward Returns poor Creatures could make him, for his inexhauſtible Goodneſs to Mankind; and as the Senſe of it increaſed upon the promulgation of the Goſpel, ſo the Zeal of lowly Hearts increas'd with it. Their only Ambition was, who ſhould do moſt for God's Honour; and who ſhould erect the nobleſt Monuments of Pious and Thankful Minds. From Age to Age Humility was ſedulouſly working; till, firſt in the Church of *Rome*, and then in other Churches, ſacrilegious Hands laid hold on ſome of God's Propriety, to main-

maintain Voluptuouſneſs and Pride, and threw away a great deal, even of the Shew-bread of the Sanctuary among Dogs.

IT would be in vain in this degenerate Age to tell Men, what they ſhould do, as to things of this Nature. But, God's Honour is to be ſerved ſtill; nor are we any more excus'd from Offices of Gratitude and profound Reſpect, than our Fore-fathers were. There are eternal Laws of Reaſon, which oblige us to render all poſſible Acknowledgments to the Great Maker, Governour and Diſpoſer of all things; nor is any thing more becoming Men of humble Minds and Tempers. His great Name is ſtill to be had in Honour; his Day to be kept Holy unto him; his Word to be reverenc'd and obey'd; the Seals of his Covenant with us to be uſed ſo, as may be moſt for his Glory; his Houſe to be frequented as the Houſe of Prayer; and his Service there to be perform'd with that Gravity and Decorum, with that Order and Solemnity, with that Fervour and Zeal, with that Devotion and Preſence of Mind, as becometh People that appear in the Preſence of that infinite Being who is to judge us at the laſt Day, and to Reward

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us all according to our Works. Had we all right Notions of God, and did we daily conſider what worthleſs, neceſſitous Beings our ſelves are; that wait upon God, as the meaneſt Animals do, that he may give us our Meat in due ſeaſon; that are troubled preſently, when God hides his Face; that die and return to our Duſt, when God takes away our Breath: Were nothing but this to be conſidered, the Power of common natural Conſcience would be enough to humble us into a readineſs of making ſuch retributions of Gratitude, as I have now mentioned.

3. AND the ſame Power of Conſcience would bring us daily upon our Knees, and lay us proſtrate on the Earth, to adore him, to praiſe him for the Glory of his Majeſty, to implore his great Compaſſion, and to give him Thanks for the conſtant Operations of his Mercy; which is the third way of ſerving his Honour. By theſe acts of Worſhip we declare our belief, that God is a ſuper-excellent Being; of ſuch Perfections in his Nature, as render him an Object moſt worthy of all Adorations: By theſe acts we confeſs, that he hearkens to all our Addreſſes; that he is able to anſwer all our

our Wants; that he is ready to receive our Invocations, and to fulfil our Desires; and that our concerns are entirely in his Hand, and at his Diſpoſal. The ſence we have of his Omniſcience, Power, Goodneſs, Wiſdom, and Providence over all, gives life and breath to our Supplications; and therefore he ſaith himſelf, *whoſo offereth me thanks and praiſe, he honoureth me*, Pſalm 50. 23. Now, none are ſo kindly condition'd for all this, as People of lowly Hearts; becauſe they are moſt poſſeſt with the admiration of God's Excellencies; moſt apprehenſive of his All-ſufficiency; moſt ſenſible of their own Defects and Indigencies; moſt apt to betake themſelves to him, and to run under his Wings for Shelter and Protection. This therefore being ſo natural to humble Spirits, we cannot better expreſs this great Vertue, than by addicting our Souls to the Love of God's Worſhip; by giving our Minds to it, by making it as Solemn as we can, by ſuch external acts of Reverence as are the ordinary ſignifications of a lowly Diſpoſition; and exemplary too in their Conſequence, that others may thereby learn how to glorifie God, as well as we. A careleſs and ſupine behaviour, as if the worſhipping of God were an indifferent, nay,

nay, a trifling matter, a sleepy Eye, an inflexible Body, and such like anomalous, odd Figures which some People make, are as unsuitable in a Christian Oratory, as changing of Money was in the Temple; and for this reason ought to be cast out, because instead of expressing a slender and low Opinion of One's own self, they rather argue Men to have very mean and contemptuous Thoughts of God. *O come*, saith *David*, *let us worship, and fall down, and kneel before the Lord our Maker*. Due Notions of an Omnipotent Creator; a due remembrance of the Dust, out of which we were formed, and into which we shall return; and due Consideration of the Hand which hath kept us from dropping into it as yet: These and the like humble Thoughts are enough to strike us down into the most reverent and lowly Prostrations.

'Tis true, there is a voluntary Humility which carrieth an ill Character with it, *Col.* 2. 18. But this is impertinently objected against the use of these external acts in the Worship of God, because it is joyned there with the worshipping of Angels. Such voluntary Humility is indeed criminal, when People address themselves to Angels, as the *Ethnicks* did to

to Dæmons, as to Mediators and Interceſſors for them to the Supreme Being, and out of a great awe and fear of approaching immediately unto God himſelf. This Humility is culpable: But this makes nothing againſt thoſe outward acts of Religious Adorations, which are directed to the Creator of all things. For ſuch acts are not properly voluntary; they are God's due, to which he hath an indefeiſable Right by having created the Body; and for that reaſon it is Idolatry to give them to a Creature, becauſe it is the giving away of God's Honour and Right; a Right founded upon an Original Law, which *Adam* and his whole Family brought into the World with them.

To argue therefore againſt ſuch ſolemn acts of Worſhip, from ſuch weak Topicks, betrays great affectation of Mind, a love of ſingularity and ſtubbornneſs; like that quarrelſome Temper that is in ſome, who lie ſtill upon the catch, and want only an opportunity of ſtarting a pretence. A Mind that is truly humble, truly conſcious and ſenſible of the vileneſs of ſuch a miſerable, ſinful Creature as Man is, cannot uſe a more genuine Method of expreſſing its Senſe of this vileneſs, than by thoſe Reverent Geſtures,

ſtures, in the Solemnities of God's Worſhip, which would be ſuitable, ſignificative, and juſtifiable, were they not commanded.

4. BESIDES theſe ways of expreſſing our lowlineſs, there is yet a Fourth, *viz.* By giving our ſelves up to God's diſpoſal. Reſignation is an inſeparable Property of an humble Soul; nor is it ever ſo becoming and agreeable, as when we abſolutely reſign our ſelves up into the Hands of God. This is greatly to honour him; becauſe it is a manifeſtation of thoſe Divine Attributes, wherein his Glory doth conſiſt. It is a confeſſion that he is a Being of uncontroulable Power, not bounded or govern'd, but by the Perfections of his own moſt bleſſed Nature: That he hath an abſolute Dominion and Authority over us, as over his own; and that he can exerciſe his Power when, and as he pleaſeth: That he is juſt in all his Proceedings, acting always according to the Equal Laws of his own Eternal and Infallible Reaſon. That he is moſt perfectly Wiſe in ordering all things according to the Counſel of his Will; and ſo tranſcendently Good, that he diſpoſeth Affairs in this World, in ſuch a manner as is beſt, and in ſuch a way

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as is moſt ſafe and proper to lead us into another World, where alone there is unmix'd Happineſs, and that Happineſs everlaſting. Theſe are the Religious Sentiments of every humble Man that is rightly inſtructed: And upon theſe ſound Principles, he believes it his ſafeſt, and moſt neceſſary courſe, to throw himſelf at God's Feet, and under God's Hand, neither thwarting nor oppoſing his Will, nor murmuring at his Providence, but ſubmitting univerſally to his Commands and Oeconomy. For all ſuch ſtubbornneſs, and ſtrivings, ſuch repinings, and diſobedience, and reluctancies proceed from Hearts that are lifted up and ſwell againſt their Maker; whoſe Wiſdom, Truth, and Goodneſs they call in queſtion, and in oppoſition to whoſe Pleaſure they ſet up their own Luſts and Paſſions; the ſturdy Vices of thoſe aſpiring Angels, who once made a War in Heaven, which ended preſently in a total defection from the Father of Spirits. Therefore, that we may expreſs and increaſe that Humility of Heart, which the Saviour of Mankind hath with ſuch earneſtneſs recommended to us all, that he may ſtock and people Heaven with New Colonies, we muſt ſubmit our ſelves unto God in all things.

FIRST,

FIRST, By reſigning up our Underſtanding, where he propoſeth matters to our belief. The only Enquiry to be made as to this is, Whether God hath revealed and declared thoſe matters? If that be once out of diſpute, we muſt acquieſce in the Revelation. How remote ſoever the things to be believed are from the reach of our finite Reaſon, and how ſeemingly impoſſible ſoever they may appear, we muſt receive them upon the Credit of God's Veracity, becauſe he cannot Lye; 'tis inconſiſtent with the Perfections of his Glorious Nature, to be capable of deceiving, or being deceived. Humane Reaſon is neither fix'd, nor large enough to be the Standard of all Truth; nor can we avoid the guilt of a thouſand Errors, if we take nothing, but what holds juſt even meaſure with our finite Capacities. Let the Point be never ſo diſputable to our own thinking, this muſt decide the Doubt, God hath ſaid it, and required us to believe it, therefore it muſt be true.

SECONDLY, We muſt reſign our Wills up, where God requires our Obedience. Becauſe his Commands cannot but be Righteous, Good, and Holy, as his Nature

ture is, they bring with them neceſſary Obligations; nor muſt our ſenſual Inclinations carry it againſt God's Law, how ſtrongly ſoever the Biaſs that is in our own Nature may be drawing of us away from the Rule. In this caſe we muſt deny our ſelves, renounce our Animal Satisfactions, and follow the Will of the God of Purity, tho' all our Intereſt and Pleaſures lie at ſtake. For, tho' God hath obliged himſelf to provide Neceſſaries for us, yet he is not concern'd to humour us: Nor is it our buſineſs to cram our Purſes, or to gorge our wanton Appetites, with the Honours and Luxuries they crave for, but to ſerve God; to *ſeek the kingdom of God, and his Righteouſneſs. Whatever he ſaith unto you, do it*; as the Holy Virgin directed the Servants at the Wedding, when ſhe pointed to Jeſus, *John* 2. 5.

THIRDLY, We muſt ſubmit unto God, by reſigning up our Perſons and Fortunes alſo to his Pleaſure, when his Providence ſhall call for that expreſſion of Humility; let our preſent Circumſtances be never ſo mortifying. We muſt not think of ever returning into a *Paradiſe* here below; or, that the Lands we are driven out into will loſe their fertility of Thorns

and Thiſtles. The Sins we act, do help to renew and aggravate the primordial Curſe; and as long as we go upon ſuch prickly Ground, no wonder if we are made, for the moſt part, to ſmart, and ſometimes to bleed alſo. Yet God, who bringeth Good out of Evil, hath made this our way to the Celeſtial *Eden*; and a Thorn in the Fleſh ſerves to accelerate our courſe thither. We may be ſure God intends it to quicken us; and we ſhould the rather be contented with his ordering of us, becauſe he is the only Wiſe Being, that knoweth what we moſt need, and what is moſt proper for us. Our Underſtandings at the beſt are very ſhort-ſighted (all humble Men muſt needs think ſo) and our Deſires lean ſo aukardly, towards an infinity of things which would hurt us, that were we to be chuſers for our ſelves, we ſhould repent of nothing ſooner than of our own options. 'Tis an happy thing, that we are all under God's Government and Care; and we may be ſure, that as long as by patient continuance in well-doing we ſeek for Glory, Honour, and Immortality in another World, he chuſeth thoſe things for us, which our Neceſſities moſt require; and in the Faith of that we ſhould evermore ſubmit to his Wiſdom,

and

and learn, in what ſtate ſoever we are, therewith to be content, as that humble-minded Apoſtle was, *Phil.* 4. 10.

5. HAVING proceeded thus far on the firſt Point, of expreſſing our Humility by ſerving God's Honour, there is but one Direction more for me to offer, before I quit this Conſideration: And it is, That we depend upon him and truſt to him, in reference to all Events. This is an honouring of God for the ſame Reaſons, and upon the ſame Grounds I mentioned before; becauſe by acts of this Nature we manifeſt our belief of his Omniſcience, Wiſdom, Goodneſs, and the like glorious Perfections, which are the prop and ſtay of all our Hopes. By virtue hereof every humble Man finds it his beſt Wiſdom, to caſt all his Care on him, who careth for us all, and to commit himſelf to him in well-doing, 1 *Pet.* 4. 19. For were ſuch Men left purely to their own Conduct and Forecaſt, they could not but act with tremulous Motions, with many Doubts and Fears, with miſtruſtful Thoughts, and miſgiving Minds, becauſe they are ſo conſcious of their manifold Weakneſſes and Imperfections. It is therefore very ſafe and ſuitable for Men of lowly Hearts, to

leave all future contingencies to the Great Governour of the World; with ſuch confidence as is conſiſtent with Humility; and with a modeſt aſſurance, that all things ſhall work together for their Good. I confeſs it is ſcarcely poſſible, eſpecially for the more thinking and ſagacious ſort of Men, to be utterly unmoved, unconcern'd in their Minds at the proſpect of Affairs, when they appear, tho' at ſome diſtance, with a melancholy Countenance, louring, doleſome Weather, which affecteth the Senſe with the appearance of a Storm, muſt needs make ſome impreſſions upon the moſt Religious Minds. But this is poſſible for us, and this we ſhould be very careful of, in all ominous and threatning Circumſtances, to act without fretting at the Diſpenſations of God's Providence, without deſpondency, without thoſe anxious and inordinate Solicitudes which undiſciplin'd, and unſubdued Spirits are ſubject unto. Becauſe there is an Almighty, All-ſufficient God that preſideth over the Univerſe; that obſerves all the Parts of it, and all Motions in it; that holds his Hand over the whole Series of Affairs; that foreſees all Contingencies, and whatſoever is likely to happen; that governs and directs every thing ſo as may be beſt for his

his own Glory, and for the Good of the whole World; that takes a more particular Care of good Men; that is with them in all their Troubles, how great and how many ſoever their Troubles be; that ordereth their Afflictions as is moſt for their Advantage: Upon theſe Principles which are ſo clear and certain, we ſhould, with all lowlineſs of Heart, compoſe our ſelves into ſuch a ſtate of acquieſcence and ſatisfaction, in reſpect of all Events; as, to live ſtill in Hope (a firm and immovable Hope) of ſeeing the Goodneſs of God, who gives us all things richly to enjoy: To ſubmit to his Providence; to cheriſh our Souls with the continual belief and conſideration of it; to be deeply affraid of nothing before us, but a bottomleſs Pit; to rely upon God's Mercy in doing the Works of our Callings. In a word, we ſhould humbly wait God's leiſure, to give us either thoſe very things we deſire, at his own time, and in his own way; or (which he never faileth to give) other Bleſſings, which he ſeeth far more profitable and neceſſary for us.

CHAP. IX.

How Humility is to be expreſs'd, by not making our own Eſteem the End of our Actions.

2. HAVING thus provided for the Honour of God; we muſt in the Second place, beware of making our own Reputation the principal End of our Actions.

THIS is utterly inconſiſtent with an humble Mind, and with the Laws of our Religion: The only difficulty is, How to reconcile it with that of *Solomon*, Prov. 22. 1. *A good Name is rather to be choſen than great Riches.* But this difficulty is inconſiderable, if we diſtinguiſh, between a Good, and a Great Name; and between making it our ultimate Deſign, to feed a vain glorious Humour, and valuing it only as a means in order to an End which is truly Honourable.

FOR the clearing of this Matter we muſt obſerve, That a Good Name is that Eſteem

Eſteem which ariſeth from Actions that are Praiſe-worthy: Vertue is very laudable Juſtice, Meekneſs, Charity, Sobriety, and the like, are things which we honour all Men for; nor is any one well eſteemed without them. By diſ-regarding theſe Vertues Men ſupplant their own Deſign; and ruine their Reputation even when they think to raiſe it. But of all Vertues, Humility yieldeth a moſt rich Perfume, and that which *is better than precious ointment*, Eccleſ. 7. 1. To condeſcend to Men of low Eſtate, and to inferiour Offices, is a thing which carrieth its own Praiſe with it; and this is well called, an honeſt Reputation. Now ſuch a Name as this we are allowed to have, becauſe it is the neceſſary Reſult of good Actions, eſpecially when we have to do with People who have a due regard for Vertue and Religion. Nay, conſidering how uſeful it is towards the ſetting forth of God's Glory, we are obliged alſo to ſeek it in ſome meaſure. For hereby we are the more able to do good in our Generation; to inſtruct, to admoniſh, to ſhew People their Duty, and their true way to everlaſting Happineſs. The good things they ſee in ſuch Directors, and the good Opinion they have of them, ſerves t make their Ad-

monitions and Examples the more operative: Whereas nothing is more Natural, than to diſcredit and abhorr thoſe whoſe improbity hath rendred them deſervedly infamous; when their Names caſt a very ill ſavour, and eſpecially when the Stench is very ſtrong and ſtale too, every wiſe Man will be jealous of them; at leaſt, afraid and ſhy of liſtning to their Counſels. Hence it is, that we are commanded to think on thoſe things which are of good report, *Phil.* 4. 8. Becauſe an honeſt Fame is ſo neceſſary to make us ſerviceable to God, and uſeful to the World in our reſpective Callings. And hence it was, that ſuch care was taken in the firſt Ages of Chriſtianity, of intruſting thoſe with Sacred Employments who were Men of honeſt report, *Acts* 6. 3. Men of good Report among them that were (as yet) without the Church, 1 *Tim.* 3. 7. That the uprightneſs of their Lives, and the honeſty of their Reputation might help to bring unbelievers into it, and be a means of promoting and carrying on the great Ends of Religion. Upon this account, it is not only an unrighteous act in it ſelf, but an injury to the Church too, and great Impiety towards God himſelf, to defame others, and eſpecially thoſe whom God hath ſet apart to ſerve him

him in any Publick Station: To reproach and rifle them of their good Names, hath a direct and immediate tendency to eclipſe the Glory of God, which never ſhines more than when the Hearts of People are brought in Obedience to the Truth. And for the ſame reaſons every innocent Perſon is bound in Conſcience to defend, as well as to ſeek, his honeſt Reputation, by all fair and juſtifiable Methods; becauſe it is a matter of ſuch moment in its Conſequences. A clear Example whereof we have in St. *Paul*, when ſome endeavoured by falſe and unjuſt Accuſations to render his Labours in the Church at *Corinth* unſucceſsful; tho' he was ſo humble as to confeſs the Crimes of his former Life, with this modeſt Hyperbole, that *he was the chiefeſt of ſinners*; yet, when the Honour of God, and the Good of Mens Souls came to be concern'd in his Reputation, that he might continue an Inſtrument of advancing both, you ſee by 2 *Cor.* 11, and 12th. *Chapters*, how zealous he was to redeem his Authority, by clearing himſelf from thoſe foul Aſperſions; tho' he was conſtrain'd to do it by magnifying himſelf, contrary to his uſual Cuſtom, and againſt his own Mind: Indeed, he there calls his boaſting, *Folly*; and himſelf, a *Fool* for it; not that the thing

thing deſerved that hard Character (his Circumſtances at that time conſider'd) but, either becauſe he thought his Adverſaries would count it Vanity; or, becauſe it looked like Vanity, and in Fact would have been ſo, had not great and neceſſary Reaſons extorted from him ſuch Gloryings, and Commendations of himſelf.

THIS ſhews, That the Laws of Humility allow, and the Laws of Charity require every one, who is conſcious of his Innocence, to vindicate and reſcue his honeſt Fame, when it hath the hard fate, to ſuffer and bleed under the cruel Mercies of unreaſonable Men. The truth is, Wounds of this kind are ſo deep and maiming, that common Nature is enough to juſtifie our endeavours to cleanſe and heal them; provided, that Revenge have no hand in the Operation, to retort the Blows, and that the Methods uſed be only ſanatory.

BUT, tho' a fair Eſteem be valuable, yet we muſt be careful of two things:

1. THAT we deſire no greater ſhare of it, than what will enable us to be ſervice-

viceable to God and Men, in our reſpective Callings. There is (as was obſerved) much difference between a good and a great Name. This we muſt beware of ſeeking, or of being pleaſed with; becauſe it proceedeth from Vanity, and helpeth ſtill to encreaſe it; like Thirſt in a Dropſie, which ſprings from the Diſeaſe, and feeds it too, by being gratified it ſelf: A return, which in that caſe ſhould not be made to ſuch a Parent. A deſire of being called every where *Rabbi*, *Rabbi*, is as inconſiſtent with an humble Mind, as the Ambition of a troubleſome Prince, that would enlarge his Dominions, and carry his Glories to the ends of the Earth; when his greateſt Honour ſhould be to do good at home in his own Country. An honeſt ordinary Repute, ariſing from the conſcionable performance of our Duty, within the limits of a private Station, is far more ſuitable to a Chriſtian Temper, than all the Luſtre and Fame that is acquired by high reaching, and rather than be guilty of ſuch vain Affectation, we ſhould covet the Solaces of a quiet Obſcurity, and imitate *Saul* when he modeſtly ran among the ſtuff, to hide his Head from the ſplendid burthen of a Crown, 1 *Sam.* 10. 22.

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2. 'Tis true; a good Name is apt to grow up to an unexpected pitch; and never more, than when we think by condeſcentions to lower it, and make it ſhrink; therefore we muſt be very careful, Secondly, that it be not the *End* we aim at, be it greater or leſs: This is properly vain glory; when a Man hath a ſtrong and greedy Appetite after popular Applauſe, as a thing very deſirable: Nor is any thing more contrary to a Spirit of Humility, than a vain-glorious Humour, an Ambition of *appearing* Great in the World, and of being thought worthy of all Deference and Eſteem. *I receive not honour from men*, ſaid the humble Jeſus, *John* 5. 41. And they who make this the Scope and End of their Actions, deſerve not the Character of his Diſciples. Such as have a mean and ſlender Opinion of themſelves, muſt needs be contented (at leaſt) if others have the ſame Opinion of them too: He that wanteth this Diſpoſition of Soul, is not humble indeed, but only ſeems to be ſo; like the *Phariſees* of old, who went about with lugubrious and dejected Countenances, as if they were the humbleſt Men in the World; yet all this was nothing but Art, and Affectation of Popularity.

larity. If they faſted, they diſfigured their Faces, that they might appear unto Men to faſt. Oh! What mortified Saints were they! If they gave Alms, the Trumpet preſently ſounded, to gather People to a ſhow, that they might have glory of Men, *Matth. 6.*

THEREFORE that there may be room enough for Chriſt in your Hearts, be ſure to caſt out the *Phariſee*, neither looking after humane Praiſe, nor valuing it any more than a ſlight puff of Air, which to day may yield a flavour, and to morrow noiſomeneſs. Whether it be through honour, or diſhonour, *ſeek the Kingdom of God, and his Righteouſneſs:* Let this be your buſineſs and deſign, to pleaſe God, and to do your Duty, whatever be the reſult of it, whether the favours, or the frowns of Men. Be careful to do the things which are honourable and praiſeworthy; and if a fair Name follows, regard it only as a Perquiſite that falleth in by the bye. And accordingly make uſe of it, as an accident dropt into your Hands, for your better aſſiſtance and encouragement in the proſecution of Pious and Charitable Purpoſes. This is indeed the only good reaſon we have, to deſire to be well eſteemed, and well ſpoken of,

of, that thereby we may be the better able to do good in the World, and that God may be the more glorified by us.

A laudable Character is a mighty advantage and help in order to theſe noble Ends; for thereby our Principles paſs among Men with the fairer Credit; our Counſels carry the greater Authority, and our Reprehenſions make the deeper impreſſions upon the Minds of People who have a good Opinion of us: And by theſe means the deſigns of Religion are the better, and the ſooner anſwer'd. *Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatſoever ye do, do all to the glory of God*, ſaith St. *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* 10. 31. Unto this end Humility prompts us to direct all our Actions; and when Men make their own glory either a Subſtitute inſtead of God's, or a Competitor with it, it is an ill ſign of ſuch a Spirit, as did once ſet up againſt the Majeſty of Heaven; but met with ſuch a fatal turn, as preſently drew on the Chains of Darkneſs: An everlaſting warning to us not to aſpire, not to ſeek our own Greatneſs; not to move in any Sphere, but by humble ways of ſubſerviency, for fear of Giddineſs and ruine. Self-exaltation, which unbecame Angels, and was ſo ſinful in them, is far more in-

intolerable in ſuch Worms as we are. God knows, the brighteſt of us is but a Gloe-worm; and the Rule before us is this, *Let your light ſo ſhine before Men, that they may ſee your good Works, and glorifie your Father which is in Heaven.* If the little Luſtre about us doth not ſerve to direct others in the Paths of Righteouſneſs and Peace, 'twere better ſuppreſs'd; like the old Veſtal Fires at *Rome*, which (as ſome tell us) burned well enough, as long as they were kept under Ground, and free from Air. Oſtentation is pernicious, not only to the Soul, but to it ſelf. To be ſeen of Men, and to make that our Aim, is the ready way to loſe our Credit while we pretend to ſeek it; and to get nothing at laſt, but the Name of vain Perſons: And ſo we miſs the Mark, by making our own ſelves the End. And the truth is, 'tis pity but it ſhould be ſo. The Vice I now ſpeak of is ſo fooliſh, that it ought to carry a Rod to puniſh it ſelf with.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

How Humility is to be expreſs'd by acknowledging our Faults.

3. BUT to forbear courting our own Praiſe, is not all we are to do to expreſs our Humility. It is, Thirdly, the office of every humble Man, to own and acknowledge his Faults. Tho' it be a modeſt Vertue, yet it is not ſo baſhful as to be aſhamed of confeſſing Miſcarriages, where the guilt is real. The reaſon of this lieth in the Nature of Humility; which being a mean and low Opinion of One's ſelf, makes the humble Perſon apt to look continually upon the viler part, and to make that known, which he diſcovers there. It was the true cauſe of St. *Paul's* repeated Confeſſions: The conſcience of his guilt would not permit him to conceal his Crimes; but moved him upon all occaſions to tell the World, how he had perſecuted the Church of Chriſt; and waſted it; and to declare himſelf the chief of Sinners. It was the Rule in thoſe days, and that which Chriſtians moſt readily obſerved,

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Confeſs your faults one to another, James 5. 16. This filled the Church with as many humble accuſers of themſelves, as there were Penitents and Converts; they confeſſed and ſhewed their Deeds, as 'tis ſaid of thoſe at *Epheſus*, Acts 19. 18. St. *Auſtin*'s Books of Retractations and Confeſſions do plainly ſhew us, what a lowly Spirit prevailed in his time. There needed then no other Remonſtrances, but what extravagant or deceived Men drew up againſt themſelves: And we of this Age might have hopes of bringing the Tempers of People into ſome Conformity to the Primitive Rule and Practice, could we perſuade Men once to be ſenſible wherein they do amiſs. But, alaſs! Chriſtianity (inſtead of Pride) is fallen to ſuch a low ebb, that many will not endure to be told their Faults; but Advice is interpreted as Diſgrace, and Reproof as Scandal. The reaſon of this is latent within; becauſe ſuch Men are ſwollen with ſo great a Conceit of themſelves, as if they were in an impeccable and infallible ſtate. Hence it is, that they love Flatterers, and very few, if any, but Flatterers, becauſe they are firſt their own Paraſites. The Vice in their Breaſts is in confederacy with that at the Elbow; and both combine to abuſe

them with Courtſhip, which they are willing to take, not as Complement, but Juſtice. 'Tis, indeed, a reproach to humane Nature, that any Man can be ſo degenerate, as to practiſe the baſe and wicked Arts of Adulation. Yet, in the obſervation of all Men, nothing is more common, eſpecially where ſome ſordid Ends may be ſerv'd by it. *Plutarch* in his excellent Book concerning the difference between a Flatterer and a Friend, tells us, That *when* Dionyſius *the Tyrant was in a fit of ſtudying Philoſophy, his Palace was crouded with Geometricians, that filled it with Duſt, to draw Schemes and Figures in: But as ſoon as the fit was over, and* Dionyſius *betook himſelf again to Luxury, all on a ſudden they that were about him left their Philoſophy too, and turned Drunkards.* As that great Moraliſt obſerves, Flatterers will adapt and ſuit themſelves to any Humour; eſpecially if they be ſerious Paraſites, which are the moſt dangerous of all. They will cheriſh, and comply with the very Vices of Men, and obſequiouſly follow them in their own way, tho' ruine be at the end of it. But the original Sin, the fatal cauſe of all this, is in proud and weak Men that love to be flatter'd. They hold out a Bait to the Sycophant, who

to

to keep himſelf from being lean, will be ſure to make uſe of it; nor has every one the bold Probity, to venture the worſt by telling Men their Faults; the hazard they run in ſuch a caſe is too apparent. *Plutarch* tells us again, but in another place, of *Philoxenus* the Poet, That being commanded by *Dionyſius* to correct a Tragedy which he had compoſed, becauſe he diſliked it from the beginning to the end, and obliterated the dull ſtuff, was preſently condemned to the Quarries. Proud Men will not endure to be thought to have done amiſs, or to be in an Error. How plain ſoever it be, it is a very hard matter to convince them, and the hardeſt of all to extort a Confeſſion from them. There is a deceivableneſs in their Temper; an odd propenſion to be ſoothed into the belief of any Miſrepreſentations, eſpecially of themſelves; a Diſpoſition like that which God ſo complained of in the *Jews*, *Jer.* 5. 30, 31. *A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land: The Prophets propheſie falſly, and the Prieſts bear rule by their means, and my people love to have it ſo.* The Queſtion that follows there is very pertinent; *and what will ye do in the end thereof?* For when once Men arrive to ſuch a pitch of ſtupid Va-

nity, there is very little hope of them; becauſe the means of Reforming them are quite fruſtrated; Advice and Reprehenſion (the ordinary means of making People wiſer and better) are utterly loſt, perhaps ſcarcely offer'd, becauſe ſuch deceived Perſons ſcorn to think there is any need of them; and hereby it cometh to paſs, that many Vices, which ſhould be weeded out, thrive daily, and become Luxuriant. But where the Spirit of God hath wrought an Heart to a right humble Mould and Frame, there the Inclination is quite the other way; a proneneſs to think or to believe the worſt of One's ſelf. And becauſe the humble Man's great buſineſs is, to ſearch into himſelf, to underſtand and find out himſelf, he is not eaſily abuſed with falſe Notions. There is a Conſcience within, which deals freely and plainly with him; too ſevere a Judge to be bribed with ſmooth Inſinuations and words of Oil, as the expreſſion is, *Pſalm* 55. 22. Hence it is, that none is ſo ſenſible of his Miſcarriages, as he; none ſo ready to confeſs them; becauſe his Eye being ſtill over his flaws and defects, what he ſeeth amiſs in himſelf, he thinks it but juſt and equal to acknowledge: This is no more than what is agreeable unto Truth. *My*

ſin,

ſin, ſaith *David*, *is ever before me*, Pſal 51. 3. And again; *I will acknowledge my ſin unto thee, and mine unrighteouſneſs have I not hid*, Pſalm 32. 5. And to the ſame purpoſe I obſerved before of St. *Paul*, That he proclaimed his Offences, as it were, from the Houſe-top: As he kept a faithful Regiſter of them, ſo he took hold of every opportunity, to open and ſpread it before the Eyes of all Men.

THESE were true Arguments and Expreſſions of Humility; and noble Examples for us all to follow, for the exerciſing and increaſing in us this great Chriſtian Vertue. Have you been guilty of any direct Impiety towards God? Why, with the loweſt Proſtrations confeſs the Sin unto him, implore his Mercy. Was it an act of Violence? An act of Oppreſſion? An act of Injuſtice, in any ſort, or to any degree? Why, tho' Men commonly count it a Shame and a Diſhonour, yet it is a kind of Modeſty, which of all things doth moſt become the Forehead of a Chriſtian, to own the Wrong, and to make Amends, or (at leaſt) to ask Pardon for it. In theſe and the like caſes we ſhould not ſuffer Pride to get the upper hand of us; or,

to make us ſo hardy, as to perſiſt, to carry a ſtiff Neck, to juſtifie or palliate thoſe things, which the Laws of Religion require us to expoſe. Sins of this nature affect the Conſcience with too great a guilt to be ſmother'd; God and Man ſhould know it; and, rather than any humble *Zacchæus* will hide his Injuſtice, he will firſt climb up into a Sycamore-Tree, and then venture into a preſs, that he may make Proclamation, *Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have wronged any man by falſe accuſation, I reſtore him four fold*, Luke 19. 8.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

How Humility is to be expreſs'd by doing all good Offices, tho' ſeemingly mean, and by ſubmiſſion to our Superiours.

4. THIS excellent Diſpoſition of Soul will prepare us to give a Fourth expreſſion of Humility, *viz.* By doing all the good Offices we can, how mean and inferiour ſoever they may ſeem to Men of haughty Eyes. To ſuccour the poor Fatherleſs; to comfort the forlorn Widow; to ſtretch out the Hand to the needy; to lend it to the Blind; to ſympathize and pray by a ſick Bed; to miniſter in Priſons and Lazaretto's; to treat Enemies courteouſly; to ſhew Reſpect to the moſt Vulgar, the moſt unfortunate part of Mankind: Theſe and the like acts of deference are looked upon with a diſdainful Eye by ſupercilious Men, who think themſelves privileg'd from ſuch trivial Offices, by the quality of their Character, or the loftineſs of their Station. And yet the

Lord Jeſus ſtooped down to the waſhing his Diſciples Feet; nay, thoſe very Feet that were now running ſwiftly to ſhed his Blood; which aſtoniſhing Example ſhews, that the moſt lowly Miniſtrations are far from beneath us, who ſtand indebted to each other in the Bond of one common Nature, and are allied by the Contract of a common Guilt too. If he, the moſt Bleſſed and Glorious Son of God, came not to be miniſtred unto, but to miniſter; Good God! What Offices can be ſervile enough for Wretches, whoſe baſe Extraction, and much baſer Crimes render us unworthy to be called, either Sons, or Servants? *Mind not high things, but condeſcend to men of low eſtate*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 12. 16. He calls that Condeſcention, which in ſtrictneſs of Speech might be called Due Retribution; an intercourſe of Juſtice, which ought to paſs between Man and Man, conſidering that we all ſtand upon the ſame Ground, equally involved in the ſame Neceſſities, mutually indebted by reciprocal Obligations, and diſtinguiſh'd only by the Pageantry of the World, which gilds one Muſhrome, while another is paſt by, and a third ſtruck down. All conſiſt of the ſame ſtuff; of the Earth, Earthy: And tho' ſome

ſome be fairer and larger than the reſt, yet the leſſer may have more intrinſick value, if in ſuch things there be any value at all. *In lowlineſs of mind let each eſteem other better than themſelves*, ſaith St. *Paul*, Phil. 2. 3. That is, in their actions towards them, ſhew others that deference and reſpect, and miniſter to them ſo, as if they were better; as indeed they may be, in ſome reſpect or other, whatever the proudeſt think. All have not the ſame gifts; at leaſt they have not the ſame proportion and meaſure the moſt contemptible Man hath, wherein he doth excel, even as the Foot hath Abilities, which the Eye wanteth. Therefore that command, *Rom.* 12. 10. That *in honour we ſhould preferr one another*, is bottom'd upon great reaſon; becauſe in every one there is ſomething which is preferrable; to be ſure an humble Man will find, in thoſe of the loweſt Rank, this or that which deſerves preference.

AND from this Fountain all acts of Charity, Goodneſs, and Condeſcention do naturally flow; becauſe how mean ſoever the Offices may appear and ſeem to be, a lowly Heart will think them a ſort of Debt, which he is obliged to pay thoſe, who upon ſome account or other, and

and for ſome Faculties and Endowments, excel him, and are much his Betters. It is the Nature of Humility, to take from it ſelf, and to beſtow that Reſpect and Eſteem it parts with, any where rather than at home: And if we would all be once perſuaded to apply our Minds to the hearty love and practice of this ſingle Vertue, what admirable effects would it not produce? The moſt ordinary works of Love would not be grudged. The meaneſt of our fellow Creatures would be within every One's reach, and under every One's care. We ſhould ſoon learn to be ſo Affable, Gentle, Courteous, Friendly, Charitable, Compaſſionate, and Aſſiſtant unto all (eſpecially to all of the Houſhold of Faith) that a more effectual courſe could not be taken to make our own and other Mens Lives happy, and to mend the condition of this World, where we ſee daily ſuch Viciſſitudes and Misfortunes. If Humanity conſtrains us to lift up an Aſs, or an Ox out of the Pit; I am ſure humble Minds would not permit us to let any of thoſe for whom Chriſt died, to lie long in a loſt or a fallen condition.

5. NEXT to this Expreſſion of Humility, a Fifth will naturally follow; which is, to behave our ſelves after a ſubmiſſive and dutiful manner to thoſe, whom God hath ſet over us in Church and State. For, if it be a neceſſary act of Humility, to do kind and reſpectful Offices to all our equals, it muſt be much more neceſſary to pay Honour and Deference to ſuch as are exalted into a ſtate of Superiority and Power. Therefore St. *Peter* links theſe two things, *Obedience and Humility*, together, 1 *Pet.* 5. 5. *Likewiſe ye younger, ſubmit your ſelves unto the elder*; yea, all of you be ſubject one to another; and be cloathed with Humility. As there are in Heaven ſeveral Degrees of Glory, ſeveral States of Saints, and ſeveral Orders of Angels, ſo hath God conſtituted on Earth different Ranks of Men, in condeſcention to the Neceſſities of the World, where the Intereſts of Societies cannot poſſibly be preſerved without Government and Laws; and, conſequently, without the ſubjection of thoſe who are in a ſtate of Subordination. Such People cannot expreſs the Humility of their Hearts more ſucceſsfully and directly for the Publick Good, than by an entire Compliance with things

things eſtabliſh'd, where the Conſtitution is not repugnant to Laws Divine. For 'tis Pride that is the great Troubler of the World, the common Peſt and Grievance, the domineering, ſurly, reſtleſs Vice that diſturbs the Peace of Mankind, and breaks that Order and Unity on which the Safety and Welfare of all Communities doth depend. That overweening Conceit which Men have of their own Worth, believing themſelves to be wiſer, and better, and more deſerving than others, doth naturally make them ambitious of Ruling, and impatient of being Ruled; and whatever the Pretences and Acceſſories may be, 'tis the Affectation of Superiority and Power that is the Principal Cauſe of thoſe diſorders, which render the Lives of People Miſerable, and turn the Condition of Affairs into a State of War. *O that I were made Judge in the land*, ſaid *Abſalom*, 2 *Sam.* 15. 4. His deſign was upon the Throne, and the Artifices he uſed to ſteal the Peoples Hearts, were nothing but ways of ſtepping up into it. His Promiſes, that he would do them Juſtice; and his Popularity, in putting forth his Hand to ſuch as did him Obeiſance, his embracing and kiſſing them: All this fawning Addreſs was to ſerve his own Am-

Ambition, and nothing but a Preamble to his ſetting up his Standard in *Hebron*. Seldom is the Civil Peace diſturbed, but Ambition blows the Trumpet, to gather Male-Contents, of the ſame Temper with their Leaders; and when the Paſſions of an united Multitude are fired by one common Principle, the Proſpect is as terrible to the State, as that was to the *Roman* Army, when *Hannibal* forced in upon them two thouſand Oxen, with combuſtible matter flaming upon their Heads. Pride is the great Incendiary, that heady and diſobedient Principle; and the Yoke being ſhaken off, Confuſion and Anarchy, and infinite variety of Miſchief muſt follow of courſe.

THE ſame Spirit of Diſobedience, which raiſeth Commotions in the State, operates in the Church too; and there indeed more fatally, becauſe animated with a great (tho' miſtaken) Zeal for Religion, and *Lucifer* there transforms himſelf into an Angel of Light. *Diotrephes* loved to have the preeminence, 3 *John* 9. and this Ambition of Mind made him ſo hardy as to oppoſe the Authority of St. *John*. *Simon Magus*, the firſt that corrupted the Chriſtian Faith, did it for fear of loſing or leſſening the Eſteem he had while he was yet a Sorcerer. He gave

gave out, that himſelf was ſome great one, and deceived People into a belief, That he was *the great power of God*, Acts 8. 9, 10. To preſerve his Credit he would have bought the Gift of Miracles; and, ſeeing it was not to be ſold for Money, to ſupport his great Name he turned Apoſtate, and the Ring-leader of Apoſtates; oppoſing and exalting himſelf above all that was called God, or that was Worſhipp'd; ſo that as God he ſate in the Temple of God, pretending himſelf that he was God, 2 *Theſſ.* 2. 4. In after-times aſſuming Spirits became Hereticks, that they might be in the Head of a Sect, and build themſelves Monuments, tho' upon the Ruines of God's Sanctuary. And in our own days the ſame Spirit ſtill worketh in the Hearts of the Children of Diſobedience, who ſet up Fancy againſt Truth, private Reaſon againſt Divine Revelation, and ſeparate Parties againſt Government and Order. The bottom of all this, is Pride; becauſe Men ſwollen with that Diſeaſe, think it beneath them to be dictated unto; would be thought more Knowing, and more Holy than others; and love ſingularity, becauſe it makes Men always talk'd of, and ſometimes venerated. And tho' for all this ſome Arguments are pretended, yet the

the Diſputation is maintain'd not ſo much for Truth, as for Victory. Pertinacy will ſtill hold, what Singularity before invented; and ſuch as coyn new Opinions, will be ſure for their Credit ſake to make them as currant as they can, to juſtifie the ſtamp they once ſet upon them. By this means poor credulous People are abuſed with falſe Notions, which by degrees make an impreſs upon their Minds, not only of the Falſhood, but of the Vice too from which the Error came; ſo that in a ſhort time Spiritual Pride grows Popular, and ends in Schiſm; which inſtead of curing the Humour, inflames it, and canonizeth a Sin which God threw out of Heaven to be damned eternally.

THEREFORE we cannot give a plainer and better Expreſſion of our Humility, than by rendring Honour and Subjection to whom it is due; and to the utmoſt extent, which the Laws of God will admit of. I am far from pleading for an implicit Faith; a blind Obedience that will neceſſarily bring us in danger of the Ditch, if we ſhould truſt barely (as ſome are taught to do) to the Conduct of our Leaders. At all times we ſhould be careful of theſe Four things.

1. FIRST,

1. FIRST, Not to ſtart Opinions out of a Principle of Oppoſition to our Superiours. For it is an ill ſign, when People have an itch in their Ears to hear their Governors hardly ſpoken of, and an itch in their Hearts to contradict and thwart them. This can proceed from nothing but from Opiniatry, and a ſtrong Preſumption in them, that they are fit to be Dictators; and it looks as if they had a mind to raiſe themſelves a Name by treading upon Authority; a thing which we are not to Trample on, but Reverence.

2. SECONDLY, In thoſe Points which are of a doubtful Nature, we ſhould pay great Reſpect and Deference to the Judgment of the Church we belong to. For every humble Man muſt think it much eaſier for one or two to be deceived, than for a thouſand; eſpecially when it is the Office of ſo many to inquire more particularly after Truth, and their Abilities are more probable to find it out. They muſt be very ſtrong Reaſons that can warrant Men to depart from a receiv'd Opinion: Yet it is not always, Reaſon, but for the moſt part Affectation that gives the incouragement; a deſire

ſire of being taken notice of, by ſtepping out of the way from the reſt, who think it more adviſable and ſafe to follow the beaten Path. For Men to diſtinguiſh themſelves by Singularity, and to ſet up Private Judgment againſt Publick Definitions, is to tell the World, that they have more Sence and Underſtanding than others, and that their own Conceits are better Standards of Truth, than any that can be found in the Sanctuary. In ſhort, where ſome particular Perſons differ in their Sence from the Church in general, private Sentiments ſhould be managed with all poſſible Modeſty. Theſe Opinions are not to be judged of by the Poll, becauſe Error is too often Popular; yet conſidering, how great an hand Pride is apt to have in all Diſputes, and how much eaſier it is for private Men to be miſtaken, than to retract, we ſhould evermore obſerve that Law of Humility which the Apoſtle hath laid before us, *Rom.* 14. 22. *Haſt thou Faith? Have it to thy ſelf before God:* That is, whatever a Man's Perſuaſion be as to things Diſputable, he ought to keep it ſo private by himſelf, as not to make it an occaſion of Diſturbance or Offence.

3. THIRDLY, When Authority requires things that are Innocent in their own Nature, we ſhould expreſs our Humility by complying with thoſe Commands. In this caſe too 'tis Pride that makes Head againſt Order; a ſtiff Sinew in the Neck, that hinders Men from ſtooping to that which Laws Divine and Humane have made their Duty. Humility teacheth us to be Pliant and Peaceable; to be Tractable, Yielding and Obſequious: And, I think, as to this we need no plainer Directions than what our moſt humble Lord gave his firſt Diſciples, *Matth.* 23. 2, 3. *The Scribes and Phariſees ſit in Moſes ſeat; and therefore whatſoever they bid you obſerve, that obſerve and do.* The Rulers he ſpake of, were for the moſt part very wicked Men, and ſcandalous Hypocrites; which was the Ground of the following Caution, *Do not ye after their works, for they ſay and do not.* And yet conſidering that in their Authority they ſucceeded *Moſes*, who had his Authority immediately of God, they were to be obeyed in all Commands that were lawful. This Rule is applicable to all Caſes now, where things which are not really Sinful are impoſed by thoſe who have the Government of us.

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They ſit in Chriſt's Seat; they derive their Authority from Chriſt, as he did his from his Father; and for that reaſon their Innocent Directions are to be obſerved, whatever their Perſonal Condition, or Quality of Life may be: And therefore when you are directed by ſuch as ſit in the Seat of the ſcornful, to hold off, and to diſobey; if the matters enjoyned be not evidently repugnant to the Will of God, you may be ſure that the Interdict is not from Chriſt, and that it is only humour, or ſtubbornneſs, or ſome ſuch evil thing, that gives the caſting Voice againſt Authority.

4. FOURTHLY, There are ſome ſet over us, whoſe Addreſs to us we may not ſo well call Mandatory, as Inſtructive. Tho' the Authority they are veſted with be after an eſpecial manner Divine, yet it muſt be adminiſtred in an humble way, and they that have it muſt be Examples of Humility, as the Son of God himſelf was, who gives them this Authority. See what he ſaid to his Apoſtles, *Matth.* 20. 25, 26, 27. *Ye know that the Princes of the Gentiles exerciſe dominion over them; and they that are great, exerciſe authority upon them. But it ſhall not be ſo among you; but whoſoever will*

be great among you, let him be your miniſter; and whoſoever will be chief among you, let him be your ſervant. And yet, ſuch Servants as they be, they muſt be ſubmitted to in their Miniſtrations; for ſo our Lord ſaith elſewhere; *He that heareth you, heareth me: And he that deſpiſeth you, deſpiſeth me; and he that deſpiſeth me, deſpiſeth him that ſent me,* Luke 10. 16. Contempts of this nature do not only reflect upon God, but are grounded too upon contumelious Notions of him, and proceed from Hearts that ſwell and are lifted up againſt him. The Probationary Atheiſt begins with efforts at the Pulpit, and goes on by degrees to a perfect hatred of God, and of Religion, and of the Miniſters of Chriſt for God and Religion ſake. 'Tis the Spirit of *Lucifer* that worketh at the bottom; a ſecret Principle of Averſion and Enmity to all that is Good and Holy. Therefore to expreſs our Humility as we ſhould, we muſt obey them that have the Rule over us, and ſubmit our ſelves to thoſe that watch for our Souls, *Heb.* 13. 17. Which St. *Paul* calls in another place, *knowing them which labour among us, and are over us in the Lord, and admoniſh us; and this, for their works ſake,* 1 *Theſſ.* 5. 12, 13. Becauſe 'tis God's Work

Work they are about, God's Buſineſs they are upon; and ſo, the Obedience paid them in the diſcharge of their Office, is carried on to God, and terminates in God, for whoſe ſake it is that the humble Perſon hath a regard to one as vile, or viler than himſelf. This is an argument of a lowly Heart, and the proper, ready way to make it more lowly ſtill; to receive the Doctrines they deliver us from the Mouth of God; to lay up in our Minds the things ſpoken; to ſet our Souls upon the Conſideration of them; to give ear to Inſtruction; to lay hold on every opportunity of being inſtructed; to follow wholſome Directions; to take even Reproofs with meekneſs, with an aptitude and willingneſs to be reformed; and for all this, to have continually prepared and open Hearts.

CHAP. XII.

How Humility is to be expreſs'd, by being contented with ſuch things as we have.

6. BECAUSE I am deſirous to draw this whole Diſcourſe to a full Point, I ſhall take notice but of two Expreſſions more of Humility, which are as Conſiderable and Neceſſary as the reſt. And that which comes next to my Hand is in *Heb.* 13. 5. That we *be content with ſuch things as we have.* Covetouſneſs, which the Apoſtle there cautioneth us againſt, is inconſiſtent with a Spirit of Humility, becauſe it is always attended with a diſtruſt of God's Providence, and with a ſecret averſeneſs to ſubmit to his Will; and is very uſually too a ſubſervient Vice to Pride; a Slave and Drudge to toil for the ſupport of it. It is the taking away, or detaining of what is not One's own; or, an inordinate deſire of that which he hath no right unto. And the great reaſon why Men reach out their Hands to wreſt *Naboth*'s Vineyard out

out of his, and are greedy of laying Field to Field, and do ſuch other acts of Oppreſſion, as are contrary to the Laws of Religion and Nature; the reaſon I ſay, of this Injuſtice is, becauſe Men intend thereby to lift up themſelves the higher in the World; they rob, and cozen, and over-reach in order to their Advancement; and that they may be the more conſpicuous, by ſtanding upon an heap; tho' Wrath and Vengeance be under it, to blow up all at laſt. Men of humble Minds had rather ſtand on low Ground, to be hid in a Multitude; for ſince the Lord Jeſus was pleas'd to be numbred with Tranſgreſſors, a poor ſinful Man need not care what his Lot is, and among whom he chanceth to be reckoned. Whatever his Station be, 'tis better than he deſerves. This one humble Reflection ſhould be enough to perſuade us, in what condition ſoever we are, therewith to be content. But beſides this, there is in every humble Soul an aptitude to conſider, that God is the Sovereign Rector of the Univerſe; that no part of it is out of the reach of his Eye, or out of the verge of his Providence; that he always acteth according to the Laws of his own infinite Reaſon, and as it is beſt for his Creatures; that he aſſigneth

to every Man his Lot and Place; that he is the only competent Judge to determine, what is proper for every Man, and what a Man himſelf is fitteſt for; that he taketh a due Care of every one, and provideth ſuch things for him, as are moſt ſuitable to his Quality and Calling; and that ſuch as ſeek him ſhall want no manner of thing that is good, *Pſalm* 34. 10. Theſe Principles are deeply rooted in all lowly Hearts, that are rightly prepared to ſubmit to the Will, and to depend upon the Promiſes of God; and the genuine Product of them is this, that 'tis our beſt courſe to commit our ſelves to God's Diſpoſal, and to be ſatisfied with his Providence and Determinations: I am ſure this is infinitely more Becoming and Advantageous, than to be always Repining and Craving, as thoſe humourſome People are, who by taking falſe Meaſures of themſelves think, whatever is done for them, to fall ſhort of their Merits; and grudge if they be not ſatisfied, when by ſtretching their Deſires continually, they render themſelves uncapable of being filled. Therefore to expreſs our Humility, we muſt carefully learn theſe three things.

1. To have as mean an Opinion of the World, as we have of our own ſelves. The reaſon why Men covet the things of this Life with ſuch Greedineſs and Ambition is, becauſe they think Happineſs to conſiſt in Riches and Greatneſs, and thoſe to be the happieſt Perſons, who have the largeſt ſhare of them. Now this is a moſt groſs miſtake, an argument of a childiſh and little Mind. For ſuch outward Enjoyments are for the moſt part inſtruments of Sin; and then they are the moſt unfortunate Men, that carry ſuch edg'd Tools in their Hands. The greater they be, the more able they are to do themſelves and others miſchief, and the more ready many times to do it. Vanity, Luxury, and a leud Life, are too often the ſad Conſequents of a plentiful Fortune; and when the loſs comes to be felt which ſuch expenſive Vices bring, Injuſtice and Rapine commonly follows next, and Repriſals are forced from defenceleſs Innocence. *Do not rich men oppreſs you, and draw you before the judgment-ſeats?* ſaith the Apoſtle, *James* 2. 6. If Men have the Grace, to make a better uſe of God's Bleſſings, yet the enjoyment of them yields no more real Comfort, than what People of an Inferiour

riour Claſs are bleſt with, who have Air, and Food, and Cloths, and Reſt, as well as the moſt Proſperous. There may be in a Palace more Splendour and Gaiety; but this affords no more ſolid Felicity, than Moon-ſhine doth warmth. In this reſpect the humble Cottage may have much the advantage, where the ſleep of a Labouring man is ſweet, ſaith *Solomon*, *Eccleſ.* 5. 12. whether he eat little or much, he eats with an appetite that needeth not the ſtudies of an Epicure, or the Arts of *Apicius*. And the drinking his own ſweat is a preparative for more delightful Refreſhments, than the niceſt Creatures can pretend to, who abuſe the Fruit, without taking any ſhare of the Works of the Vineyard. Thoſe Pleaſures which Humane Nature univerſally thirſteth after, run commonly in low Channels; the deſpiſed part of Mankind go away with them; to be ſure with as great a portion of them, as the moſt craving men can have; and 'tis in vain to look for Happineſs any where below, but in the exerciſe of Virtue; particularly this. Virtue, Contentedneſs of Mind; without that, and for want of that alone, *Haman* himſelf was unhappy amidſt all his Honours; all availed him nothing, becauſe he was ſo diſcontented to ſee *Mordecai* the

the *Jew* ſitting at the King's Gate, *Eſth.* 5. 13.

2. HAVING poſſeſt our Minds with low Thoughts of the World, we muſt, in the next place, ſhew our Humility, by being ſatisfied with things neceſſary. My meaning is not, that we muſt deſire no more, than what is juſt enough to ſupport Nature. For there are many things which One's Vocation, Quality, and Condition of Life calleth for, beſides what Nature requires for its maintenance. The Neceſſities of Princes, and great Men, are more and greater, than what ordinary People can pretend. And ſo it is throughout all inferiour Ranks and Orders of Men; according as their Families and Charges are, and according as their Degree and Condition is, wherein the Providence of God hath placed them, ſo are their Neceſſities; theſe riſe or ſink in proportion to the other. The ſhort of the matter then is this, That when God hath made competent Proviſion for us, anſwerable to our Condition, ſuitable to that Place, Degree, and Station, wherein he hath been pleaſed to diſpoſe of us, we ſhould command our Deſires, and keep them from running out, and from roving abroad after things

things ſuperfluous. If ſuperfluities fall into our Hands of themſelves, we are to diſpenſe them where they are needful, and as it is moſt for the Glory of God, and for the good of our Brethren. But our Appetites muſt not be ſo inordinate, as to crave for more than what we want our ſelves; and when thoſe Neceſſities are anſwer'd, we ſhould be ſatisfied and thankful. 'Tis Pride that makes Men unſatiable; becauſe they think they never have as much as they deſerve: And this is its condemnation, That it quarrels with God for that he doth not humour us, and for not gratifying our Luſts, tho' he liberally ſupplies our real Wants. It is a very true Obſervation, That none are ſo querulous, ſo greedy, ſo reaching after more, as thoſe to whom God hath been very open-handed, and who have moſt reaſon to give Thanks, inſtead of Complaining; like ſqueamiſh Stomachs, that nauſeate the wholeſome Proviſion which is before them in abundance, and long for Rareties which are out of the way: A plain ſign, not of Want, but a Surfeit; and of a Diſeaſe within which needs a Phyſician rather than a Purveyor. Humble Men are glad of that which is within their reach; and make themſelves Happy in the enjoyment of it, becauſe they take it

it as a Doal that God ſeeth to be fitteſt for them, tho' it be not a *Benjamin*'s Meſs, nor the miraculous Portion of Quails and Manna. A competency is beſt; and few can think they want that, if they be not ſo partial, as to make their own unreaſonable Appetites, Judges in the caſe: An upright Conſcience will tell them, that they have at hand what is for their Neceſſity, and for their Delights too. Indeed God doth not rain down his Bleſſings upon ſome, as he doth upon others; but the reaſon is, becauſe great Plenty would not be ſo good for them: The Soil in ſome places is ſo odd, that much watering would produce little but a crop of Nettles; things that would bring ſmart and hurt. Such is the Temper of ſome Mens Hearts, that were they as Great and Powerful as they could wiſh, there could be no tolerable living near them, and very ſlender hopes of their own living well in another World; ſo apt are many to make an ill uſe of the Riches of God's Mercy. 'Tis therefore an act of his Wiſdom and Goodneſs, to keep thoſe low, whoſe exaltation would be fatal: But as for the neceſſary Accommodations of Life, he provides thoſe for all; and gives them opportunity and means of gathering every day as much as will ſerve their

their turn, if they be not ſuch ſluggards, as to need the Ant for a Monitor. 'Tis not Nature, but Luxury, that complains for not being fed; and the Mother of that is Pride; which is like the Horſe-Leach we read of, *Prov.* 30. Whoſe two Daughters (that is, the two Forks of its Tongue) are always craving, Give, give; ſucking on, till the ſanguine Creature drops down through abundance, but not through ſatiety. Our real Neceſſities are not hard to be anſwer'd, if we would confine our fugitive Deſires, and ſuffer our ſelves to be in a Paradiſe, by being contented with what may be daily brought to our Doors, by the Bleſſing of God upon our honeſt Induſtry. Food and Cloths no Body needs want; and that is as much as the very greateſt can have; and more than they carry into another World with them: And why ſhould not every lowly Heart be pleaſed to have the ſame Portion; in having the Belly and the Back provided for as well, tho' not with the Vanity of ſumptuous and gorgeous Furniture? That plain and humble Man, the Father of the Twelve Tribes, as he was Journying towards *Haran*, was an Emblem to all that travel towards the Land of everlaſting Reſt. He paſſed on with a poor Staff in his Hand; and at

Bethel

Bethel he took of the Stones he found there, and put them for his Pillows, and lay down upon them to ſleep: And in the morning, he ſet them up for a Pillar, and pouring Oil upon the top of it, he vowed a Vow, ſaying, *If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on; ſo that I come again to my Father's houſe in peace; then ſhall the Lord be my God: And this ſtone, which I have ſet for a pillar, ſhall be God's houſe; and of all that thou ſhalt give me, will I ſurely give the tenth unto thee,* Gen. 28. Here was Gratitude, Simplicity, and Religion, mixed with the Modeſty of a truly humble Mind; the thing he asked for, was Bread and Raiment: And conſidering what an Improvement Chriſtianity is of Nature, this ſingle Example renders St. *Paul's* Exhortation the more binding, 1 *Tim.* 6. 8. *Having food and raiment, let us therewith be content.*

3. IN order thereunto we ſhould learn yet a Third thing; namely, not to make envious Compariſons between our own Condition, and the ſtate of thoſe who are Superiour to us. This is a great cauſe of Mens Diſſatisfactions and Murmurings, not that themſelves want, but becauſe others

thers have a more liberal allowance. The Original of this, is Pride, which makes Men look a-ſquint upon thoſe above them, wiſhing themſelves in their Place, or at leaſt in a collateral Line with them; and thinking it hard meaſure, that their Station and Fortunes are not greater; and all this upon a vain ſuppoſition of their own, that they are as deſerving as the beſt. This is to direct Providence, and to ſet up againſt it; than which nothing can be more inconſiſtent with a Spirit of Humility. For they who have a mean Opinion of themſelves, muſt needs think they are well uſed, if they have any room aſſigned them by the Almighty, tho' it be the lowermoſt Seat; and are obliged to acquieſce in his Determination, becauſe we are not our own chuſers, and the leaſt expreſſion of Favour from God, is not Debt, but Kindneſs and Grace. We ſhould be careful therefore to take our Lot as it falls; and to look upon it, not as Partiality but Wiſdom in him, when he keepeth down one, and ſetteth up another. He is the only competent Judge of what is fitteſt to be done; and the reaſons of his Providence are always Great, tho' we cannot peep through the Veil to ſee them at every turn.

In

IN all his Proceedings he hath a regard to the Beauty, Order, and Stability of his whole Creation, and to the Good of every part. And as this infers a neceſſity of conſtituting different States and Conditions amongſt Mankind, that one may be ſubſervient to another, and that all may be ſubſervient to his Glory; ſo it requires us with all Humility to be contented with that Place and Condition, which God in his Wiſdom thinks to be moſt proper for us. This is the true way of husbanding God's Diſpenſations ſo, that we may be happy under them, how obſcure ſoever our Sphere, and how ſlender ſoever our Fortunes are, if compar'd with theirs, whoſe Pomp ſome have the Vanity and the ill Nature to grumble at.

FELICITY doth not reſide only in ſtately Manſions; nor indeed can it have acceſs to them, unleſs a lowly Heart be ready there to give it entertainment. It hath its abode with Contentedneſs, where-ever that dwells, tho' within a little Door, under a low Roof, with plain Diet, and in an homely Dreſs. It is a contented Mind that makes one happy indeed; and ſo, every one may be

happy at home, if he will. 'Tis but bounding his extravagant Ambition, and being ſatisfied with his daily Bread, and the thing is preſently done. And this an humble Heart teacheth us to do; becauſe the Bread we have is of God's giving. We pray for it daily, or, at leaſt, we ſhould; and becauſe it is God's Hand that reacheth it unto us, we ſhould bleſs him over it: And when we receive it with Thankfulneſs, and Comfort, and pleaſure of Mind, a dinner of Herbs is much better Fare, than the ſtalled Ox, that is ſacrificed to the Luſts of the voluptuous and proud Wretch.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

How Humility is to be expreſs'd, by keeping an Even Temper in a State of Proſperity.

7. THE laſt Expreſſion of Humility which I ſhall mention, hath more peculiar reference to thoſe whom God hath bleſs'd with a flouriſhing Condition. Humility is God's way to Honour; and to ſit down in the loweſt Room is to be capable of Advancement at God's Hands, who *exalteth them of low degree*, as the humble Mother of our Lord ſaid, *Luke* 1. 52. And when God is pleaſed to do this, we ſhould expreſs our Humility, by keeping an Even Temper in a proſperous State. To ſhew how well-pleaſed God is, when People diligently follow the Works of their lawful, tho' it be a mean Calling; the firſt two Kings that were ſet ſucceſſively upon the Throne of *Iſrael*, were advanced, by God's own Directions to that great Dignity from ordinary Employments; *Saul*, as he was ſeeking his Father's Aſſes;

and *David*, as he was feeding his Father's Sheep. Which is an argument, that poor Beginnings are not any ſlurr; 'tis vanity and ſuperciliouſneſs, that is both the Crime and the Infamy, which too frequently follow a ſtate of Exaltation. 'Twas the Vice which coſt *Saul* his Credit, Crown, and Life. By what we read of him, before his advancement he deſerv'd the Character of a modeſt and humble Perſon: But Promotion, which makes a great Man, too often ſpoileth a good one; eſpecially when he is mounted high, not by gradual aſcents, but by a quick and unexpected lift. It preſently turn'd *Saul*'s Head; ſo that firſt he uſurped *Samuel*'s Office; then acted againſt God's own expreſs Command, in ſparing the *Amalekites*; then grew ſowre, ſullen, envious, ſpightful, falſe, and outrageous, (which I ſuppoſe is meant by the evil Spirit from the Lord, that troubled him, 1 *Sam.* 16.) And at laſt departed from God, to conſult a Pythoniſs: So that, as things fell out accidentally, through the Foolliſhneſs and Corruption of his own Heart, it had been better for *Saul* to have remained ſtill among the Aſſes. Indeed this Inſtance with all its Circumſtances is ſingular. But yet 'tis no uncommon thing to obſerve, That it is a very

very hard matter for ſome to bear up againſt their own Proſperity; and that the danger of their being loſt is the ſame with what a little Pinnace is in, when driven impetuouſly with ~~two~~ great ſail in the Head; eſpecially if it wants Balaſt. This abuſe of Proſperity proceeds from a three-fold cauſe.

1. FIRST, From a degeneracy and ſordidneſs of Diſpoſition; which, whether it be purely Natural, or Accidental, and for want of liberal, ingenuous Education, we need not diſpute. Every days Experience ſhews, That none are ſo heady and aſſuming as thoſe of baſe Originals; Trifles made lately of an ugly ſort of Clay, which no Art can bring to a due Temper, nor any thing Reduce, but a ſtroke from the Potter's Hand that formed them. The Perſonage, whom good Breeding and Quality makes Illuſtrious, diſtinguiſheth himſelf from the dirty Swain by his kind, courteous, and endearing Behaviour. Tho' his Fortunes grow, his Mind is kept prun'd and hindred from running out into thoſe Luxuriances and Inequalities, which, without due care, all are ſubject to; eſpecially ſuch whoſe Root is in a Dunghill. That Arch-Biſhop of *Mentz* (*Willegis*) whoſe

Father was a poor Carpenter, did a very becoming act in hanging his Houſe with repreſentations of Saws and Axes; that he might be ſure, not to forget whence he had been hewn; and might preſerve himſelf the better from being elated by his ſurpriſing Dignity. Men ſhould be very watchful over themſelves when their Fortunes ſwell, leſt their Hearts ſwell with them. For then is the great Danger; and then the Honour and the Vertue appears to admiration, when they govern themſelves with ſuch a ſtrict Hand, as to be always of a Piece; the ſame condeſcending Men, as when Obſcurity and Wants made them crouch; equally as obliging, as when they ſtood in need, and courted thoſe whom a Principle of Vanity would be apt, without great care to make them afterwards deſpiſe.

2. THIS unevenneſs of Temper, and ſhameful Diſparity between the Man and himſelf, proceedeth, Secondly, from palpable Imprudence. 'Tis a ſign of a weak Head, when a Vertigo takes it upon the top of an Hill: There is ſome Defect within, in the Intellectual as well as Moral Faculties; ſomething is wanting, which ſhould poiſe the Mind, and keep it ſteddy,

dy, when our Condition grows and riſeth to a conſiderable pitch. To think we can be ſo high, as to be above all, and out of the reach of all, is a very fooliſh Imagination; for we are ever in danger of one another, and always ſtand in need of one another; and one time or other the loftieſt find it ſo: And ſuch inequalities of Temper, as Grate in a proſperous Condition, as they are more diſcernible and offenſive, ſo they expoſe vain People the more, firſt to Envy, and then to Ruine at the next fair opportunity. For the ſtate of this World ever was, and ever will be mutable; the Ground we ſtand upon is very ſlippery; nor are any more commonly tripp'd up, than thoſe that think they have ſure footing. *Pride goeth before deſtruction; and an haughty ſpirit before a fall*, ſaith *Solomon*, Prov. 16. 18. His own Father had found much of this, after his advancement to the Throne; he ſaid in his Proſperity, he ſhould *never be removed*; God, as he thought, had of his Goodneſs made his Hill ſo ſtrong, *Pſalm* 30. 6. But he ſhews us himſelf in the very next words, what a vain and weak Conceit this was: *Thou didſt turn thy face from me, and I was troubled.* Nothing is more uſual than to ſee ſuch Viciſſitudes and Turns in the

World; and many times Fortune is moſt perfidious to thoſe, who take occaſion by its Liberality to be falſe to others, and to deceive themſelves too with vain and fooliſh Confidences of their own. Such Cheats fall fatally, and the more fatally for having been ſo; and commonly where they tumble, they lie unpitied. Theſe things wiſe and thinking Men will conſider in time, while the Bleſſings of God are in their Hands, and will carry them with ſuch Evenneſs, and Caution, and true Generoſity of Mind, that all good People may have reaſon to wiſh, they may never drop out of Hands that uſe them ſo well.

3. But after all, this unevenneſs of Temper I now ſpeak of, proceeds not ſo much from ſome foulneſs and imperfections in Nature, as from a wicked Abuſe of God's Grace, which is given Men to rectifie what is amiſs in them. There is in it a mighty touch of the Devil, who once ſet up againſt the moſt bleſſed God, becauſe he found himſelf a very glorious Creature. It is from ſuch a Spirit, that the greater and higher Men are in their outward Eſtate, the prouder too they are in their Minds. They take their Acquiſitions, not as Gifts and Boons, but

but as Rewards, and as Payments in part of a great Debt. This muſt needs be the ſecret Principle ſuch elated People go upon; that all they have is a due; and but a pittance neither, in compariſon of what they ought to have, and are very fit for. Hence it is, that their Pride increaſes with their Enjoyments. They conclúde, that their ſingular Advantages are only in Conſideration of their ſingular Deſerts; retributions of Providence; and as theſe are larger and larger, ſo is the Admiration of themſelves greater and greater ſtill: And then it is no wonder, if Men who are poſſeſt with ſuch lofty Notions, look down Diſdainfully upon all below them; becauſe they take meaſures of themſelves and others by Events, and Providential Succeſſes. They look upon theſe as clear Arguments and Determinations on their behalf, becauſe they believe that God ſideth with them, and allots them the upper-hand, by reaſon that he too thinks them to be really better than their Neighbours. Now theſe are very dangerous Conceits, becauſe they are bottomed upon *Lucifer*'s Sin, and evidently lead proud Men to the very ſame Fate. Therefore we cannot give better or plainer Expreſſions of our Humility than by keeping our Minds

Minds down, and by doing ſuch acts as argue them to be ſtill in a ſubdued Condition, however it ſhall pleaſe God to exalt us. A ſtate of Greatneſs adds a vaſt Luſtre to this Vertue; or, rather creates a Luſtre in it, which makes it the more Admirable and Exemplary. It is then moſt Charming, when we cloath our ſelves with it in defiance of all Proſperity: Nor was *Solomon* in all his Glory arrayed like one ſuch little one. For this I appeal to the common Senſe of Mankind, whoſe daily Obſervations ſhew us, That there is no ſuch glorious Ornament as Humility; eſpecially when it keeps its former place in the midſt of flouriſhing Circumſtances; when no Advancement can be powerful enough, to tranſport Men to an indecent Diſtance; nor to bring with it a techy Temper, or a ſupercilious Look; nor to make them forſake thoſe kind Offices, which they were ready for in a low Station.

THE more becoming and admirable this Vertue is, the greater care is required of us to preſerve and keep it in all Conditions; but more particularly in a proſperous State, when the World ſmiles upon us, and fallacious Fortune attempts by Careſſes and Flatteries to ſteal away our

our humble Hearts from us. Then we ſhould uſe the greater Caution, becauſe the danger of loſing our ſelves is then juſt at hand. 'Tis no hard or uncommon thing, for People to carry themſelves in an humble manner while their Condition is low. The difficulty is, how to act with the ſame Mien when Honours and Riches increaſe. In ſuch caſes Peoples Minds are naturally apt to be puffed up, eſpecially thoſe who are of ſmall Value, People of little Senſe, and of leſs Goodneſs. 'Tis very uſual for ſuch, when their Affairs begin to glitter, to be full of ſelf-admiration, and to be carried away with Vanity. Nay, ſome are ſo weak, as to think it proper for them to affect State; tho' it ſits very aukwardly, and ill upon them; is very unſuitable to ſuch little things; and makes them as ridiculous, as Trappings of Gold do a Mule, or an Aſs. If therefore our Fortunes grow, we muſt be ſure to ſet the ſtricter Watch over our own Minds; we muſt preſently provide againſt all danger of a Flatus within, that may make our Brains giddy; and beware of every thing that may tempt us to put on a ſcornful Brow, or an imperious Temper. Indeed, the more God is pleaſed to multiply his Bleſſings upon us, the more humble we ſhould be.

And

And this I take to be the ſafe, infallible Rule to go by in ſuch a caſe, ſtill to lower our own Minds within, the more God exalts us without: For fear we ſhould not be able to poiſe Affairs ſo, as to keep the Scales even enough, to make our Hearts the Over-balance to caſt the one Scale, by ſinking and being depreſt, as theſe our external Acquiſitions riſe in the other. To be the more Self-denying for living Great; to be the more Charitable, Beneficent, and Open-handed for being Wealthy; to be the more Cautious and Tender, for being Powerful; to be the more Devout and Holy, for being Proſperous; to be the more Innocent and Juſt, for having a plentiful Meaſure of God's Goodneſs; to be the more Condeſcending, for being High; to be the more Affable, Courteous, Obliging, Meek, Peaceable, and Eaſie to be intreated, for having the more Advantages, the more Abilities and Opportunities of doing thoſe things which are Praiſe-worthy: Theſe indeed are truly Noble Expreſſions of a lowly Heart.

The

The CONCLUSION.

HAVING now diſpatch'd thoſe things which in the beginning of this Diſcourſe I promiſed to conſider, I ſhall conclude all with an humble Addreſs to my Readers, to do their part in making ſuch a Chriſtian Uſe of what hath been ſaid, as may be for their own real Good: The great End which I had at firſt in my Eye, and that which ſhould be the rather anſwer'd, becauſe it is of the quickeſt diſpatch, as well as of very near concern. To write Diſcourſes is not ſo eaſie, as to make a good Uſe of them, if Men would apply the Zeal of Honeſt and Religious Hearts to do it: Which, methinks ſhould not be wanting where they are ſure before-hand of this Advantage, that *their labour ſhall not be in vain.* Neceſſary indeed it is; abſolutely neceſſary in order to our everlaſting Happineſs in another World. For we muſt not be ſo fooliſh as to think, that God will drag us to Heaven againſt our Wills; or, that he will give us a Portion of Bliſs there, if we be indiſpos'd and unprepared for it. The Practice of Religion and Vertue ſerves to make us meet and fit for what

what we are to do among Saints and Angels: And this particular Vertue I have been treating of, is a principal Diſpoſition of Soul, that we muſt carry thither with us. Beſides, no other Vertue is or can be more neceſſary to make us happy in ſome meaſure here. There is ſuch a cloſe connexion of This to divers other Vertues, and of all, to Happineſs, that our Duty is in the very Practice of it a Reward; nor is it poſſible for us to be miſerable, no not in this Life, but by our acting Hoſtilities againſt our ſelves; and ſuch Hoſtilities too, as none but Fools would deſire to gain a Victory by, becauſe it is a Conqueſt over our own Felicities. This Vertue, for inſtance, Humility, brings with it a kind of Heaven upon Earth: It is attended with ſuch Faith in God, with ſuch Submiſſion to his Will, and with ſuch Dependance upon his Truth, Mercy, Power, and Goodneſs, that a compos'd and happy State of Mind muſt needs attend it too; ſo that by trampling upon this Vertue, People do really deſtroy their own Comforts; and what-ever proud Men think, they have no ſuch Enemy, as the Satan in their Breaſts. Hence it is, that Humility is ſo often extoll'd, ſo often commanded, ſo often encouraged by various Promiſes through-

throughout the Scripture; becauſe God ſeeth it to be ſo infinitely Inſtrumental to our own Good.

THIS renders the Conſideration the more melancholy and lamentable, that a Vertue which would be a common Bleſſing, is ſo great a Rarety. For, if we take a ſtrict view of thoſe Evils, which imbitter Mens Lives, and ruine the Peace in Church and State, which would make them happy, we ſhall find, that they all or moſtly proceed from an epidemical Principle of Pride, which gives thoſe ſturdy Vices both birth and maintenance. When *Hagar* had the Inſolence to deſpiſe her Miſtreſs, no wonder that the *Egyptian* brought forth a wild *Iſhmael*, whoſe Hand was againſt every Man, *Gen.* 16. 12. Such a troubleſome off-ſpring naturally deſcends from an imperious Parent: And 'tis ſuch another Original that thoſe outrageous Sins come from, which infeſt us to this day, both within our own Walls, and abroad in the World. A too great and overgrown Conceit of One's ſelf, doth by a Phyſical Influence diſpoſe him to think it very hard to be adviſed, harder to be commanded, and the moſt intolerable diminution to obey. Hence proceed Diſcontents, Murmurings, Impatience, Headineſs,

dineſs, deſires of Innovation, contempt of our Superiors, reviling of Magiſtrates, affectation of Power, and divers other Wickedneſſes, which prepare Men to caſt off the Yoke, and to bring on innumerable ſorts of Rapine and Oppreſſion, which are always the certain Conſequents of avowed Diſobedience.

WERE a Spirit of Humility ſuffer'd to prevail in the World, it would ſoon bring with it ſuch a compos'd, peaceable, and harmonious ſtate of Affairs, as would make Private People, and Publick Societies as happy, as they could wiſh to be on this ſide Eternity: And when a Vertue that is ſo excellent, is yet ſo ſcarce, it ſhews us to our ſhame what great Fools Men are; and what ſtupidity there is in ſome Natures, which can endure to be laugh'd at for being fond of a Vice, which was *Lucifer*'s Crime, and is now propagated on Earth only to be our common Plague.

BUT having ſpoke already of the unreaſonableneſs and hurtfulneſs of Pride, I ſhall not draw you back to Meditations we have paſt from long ago, but cloſe all by deſiring you to look forward, to the end of it. There are two things yet

yet to come, that will ſtain the Pride of all Glory, as the Prophet ſpeaks, *Iſa.* 23. 9. I mean, Death, and Judgment. Theſe will give the laſt ſtroke to all our Follies; and the proſpect of them is enough to lay our Minds proſtrate, if our Pride be not like *Alexander*'s, whoſe Triumphs exalted him into the ſillieſt Fancy, *That he was immortal.*

1. O Death! How bitter art thou to a Man that ſitteth at Eaſe in his Poſſeſſions? And ſo it muſt needs be to every vain Man that ſetteth himſelf in too rich a Chair of State. Tho' for that reaſon ſuch People think of nothing ſeldomer, than of dropping into the Grave, yet *it is appointed unto all men, once to die,* Heb. 9. 27. And when that Meſſenger comes to execute its Commiſſion, no Riches can Bribe it off, no Grandeur can keep it at a Diſtance, nor can any Arguments perſuade to uſe Reſpect. It will ſtrike all with an impartial Hand, lay all of us down in our primordial Duſt, and there give Prince and Peaſant an equal Portion. There no diſcrimination is made between High and Low, when once all are laid down. The haughty Head, the long Arm, the thick and

heavy Finger, has there the very ſame fate, with the Hand that once hung down, and with the feeble Knee; nor doth the Worm make any difference, between the pamper'd Fleſh, and that which was wont to be covered with Sack-cloth. Theſe are mortifying Meditations; and ſuch as have a direct tendency to humble us all, would we daily conſider, whither we are going; what a ſtate we ſhall all fall into at laſt; and how we ſhall be hudled together in one common heap of Duſt. Men generally ſtoop in their old Age: Nature thereby ſhews them, that they ſhould daily look down towards the Hole, that will ſhortly receive them, and that every day draws them, as it were, by a Magnetick faculty more and more towards it. And the oftner we think of this, the apter our Minds will be to bow down too; nothing being ſo powerful for the pulling down of vain Imaginations, as the remembrance and ſenſe of our Mortality. For which reaſon I have now imitated the Cuſtom of the old *Perſians*, who at their ſplendid Entertainments were wont to ſerve up a Death's-Head for the laſt Courſe, to put one another in mind, what they were to come to after all their Jollities. If this

was

was thought ſo uſeful a thing by *Ethnicks*, who looked not beyond the Grave; at leaſt had not thoſe Eyes which have been given Us by him who cured the Blind; 'twere ſtrange, if we ſhould not be much more powerfully wrought upon, who have a farther and clearer Proſpect; I mean, of a Judgment, which begins preſently upon our Diſſolution.

IT is no great matter what becomes here of our Bodies: They do but go home to their Parent. The Duſt *returns to the earth as it was*; *and the Spirit returns unto God who gave it*, Eccleſ. 12. 7. To receive its Sentence at God's Hand, according to all it hath done in the Body. The Author of the Book of *Wiſdom*, would have us conſider beforehand, what the End will be, when the Accounts of our Sins (and more particularly, of our Aſſumings) come to be caſt up. *What then will the pride of men profit them? And what good will their riches, with all their vaunting, do them?* Wiſd. 5. 8. The ſin which at firſt was with ſuch fury thrown out of Heaven, we may be ſure will never find any re-admiſſion thither. And therefore it

everlaſtingly concerns us, to caſt it away from us in time, becauſe it affects the Soul with a curſed Incapacity of ever appearing in the preſence of the humble Jeſus, to Reign with him, after all its Imperiouſneſs on Earth. A wicked Soul is utterly uncapable of this, by reaſon that its Inclinations and Diſpoſitions are utterly inconſiſtent with that State, which is the Portion of juſt Men now made Perfect. The bare paſſing of Souls out of this World into the next, cannot poſſibly be enough to change their Temper. Death indeed gives them an outlet, into ſuch Places as are ſuitable and proper for them; but it doth not make an entire alteration of their Faculties and Habits; it is no ſuch Refiner, as to cleanſe what was polluted; Repentance, and Faith in the Blood of Chriſt muſt do that before we go hence, or elſe it will never be done. *He that is unjuſt, will be unjuſt ſtill; and he that is filthy, will be filthy ſtill; and he that is righteous, will be righteous ſtill; and he that is holy, will be holy ſtill*, Revel. 22. 11. Thoſe Diſpoſitions and Qualities which Souls have at Death, they carry with them into another World, and keep with them for ever: And ſo we may add, That he which

which is proud, will be proud ſtill; and therefore cannot be fit for any Place, but where that Vice is puniſh'd, nor for any Company but the Devil and his Angels, that were firſt guilty of it. How light ſoever Men make of their evil Tempers, the end of them muſt be miſerable; they have a neceſſary and direct tendency towards it; nor is there any way of preventing it, but by being new Creatures here: It is by acquiring new Natures, new Diſpoſitions, new Qualities and Habits, which may make *us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in light*, Col. 1. 12. Of thoſe Qualities, an humble Temper is one, and indeed one of the chiefeſt: And therefore the Promiſe of a preſent and future Reſt is made more eſpecially to this Vertue, *Matth.* 11. 29. *Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye ſhall find reſt to your ſouls. Which God of his Mercy grant unto us all for the ſake of that great Exemplar of Holineſs and Humility, Jeſus Chriſt.* Amen.

Almighty and Everlaſting God, who of thy tender Love towards Mankind, haſt ſent thy Son, our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, to take upon him our Fleſh, and to ſuffer

Death upon the Cross, that all Mankind should follow the Example of his great Humility; mercifully grant, that we may both follow the Example of his Patience, and also be made Partakers of his Resurrection, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

FINIS.

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